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*Alexander the Great*



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ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

A DRAMATIC POEM

*By the same Author.*

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MACMILLAN.

# ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

*A DRAMATIC POEM.*

BY  
(*Thomas*)  
AUBREY DE VERE,

AUTHOR OF "LEGENDS OF ST. PATRICK."

12 ✓  
HENRY S. KING & Co.,  
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*TO THE MEMORY*  
*of*  
*COLERIDGE.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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DURING the last century it was thought philosophical to sneer at "the Macedonian madman," and moral to declaim against him as a bandit. Maturer reflection has led us to the discovery that "a fool's luck" helping a robber's ambition could hardly have enabled a youth but twenty-two years of age when he began his enterprise to conquer half the world in ten years. The ancients made no such mistake. They admired, and therefore they understood. Heroism stood before them, and they could see it; though, with their lights, they could not note its limitations, or appreciate the evil that vitiated the greatness.

Alexander was one of those few who combine the highest military genius—in him it was an inspiration—with a statesmanship, instinctive and

unerring. His intellect was at once vast and minute. His aim was to consolidate the whole world into a single empire, redeemed from barbarism, and irradiated with Greek science and art, an empire such that its citizens, from the mouths of the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules, should be qualified to learn from Plato, and to take delight in Sophocles. Yet, when passing rapidly through Hyrcania, Arachosia, and Sogdia, he found time to detect and prohibit the pettiest traditional usages incompatible with the civilization he had resolved to create. Everywhere he sought to elicit energy and reward industry, applying the hoarded treasures of Persia to colossal labours, such as those river improvements and canals which were to have connected the Mediterranean with the Indian Sea. If he scattered those treasures at times with a prodigal hand it was to circulate the gold which was profitless while heaped up. He is said to have founded seventy cities. Many of them were probably little more than fortresses ; but in other cases their sites were chosen for commercial purposes with a skill which Alexandria attests to this day. With the same intention he planted Greek colonies in the conquered countries as far

eastward as Cabul, nay, as Lahore, where then stood Sangala. On his death it was discovered that he had issued orders likewise for the formation of Asiatic colonies in the west. While promoting the intermarriage of the races, he was ever careful to provide for the Greek culture of the young.

Mr. Grote, who does ample justice to Alexander's military genius, science, and sagacity, as well as to his unrivalled power as an organizer, and who thinks that, had he lived, he must have succeeded in those plans which occupied him at the time of his death, for the subjugation of Europe, Northern Asia, and Northern Africa, yet maintains that his empire would have differed from that of Persia only in its universality, and its more perfect military system. In defence of this opinion he alleges that Alexander, like the Persian kings, left some of the conquered princes undisturbed on their acknowledging him as their suzerain, and governed his provinces mainly through native satraps. But with those satraps he joined in authority Greek or Macedonian military chiefs; and, unlike the Persian kings, he trod down the predatory hordes, declared war against the pirates, lightened taxation,

punished administrative abuses, and took the best means for their eventual suppression by piercing the deserts with roads, and showing an example of that inflexible justice which he required from his servants. Mr. Grote censures Alexander for his adoption of the Persian court ceremonial, despite the angry jealousies of the Greeks. Alexander's conduct in this respect proves only that, although he had great "ideas," he was not an idealist. His mind was at once idealistic and practical. Those who thought him a dreamer discovered speedily and painfully their mistake. His temper likewise, domineering as it was, while it recoiled before no opposition, yet evaded the battle with the impossible. He knew that no rule is lasting except where the ruler, however despotic, is yet the virtual representative of the ruled—the exponent of what they most deeply revere and love. He knew that if he remained an alien in his subject realms, his dominion could but pass over them, like a meteor, and be extinguished. Alexander had been advised by Aristotle not to place the Asiatics on a political or military equality with the Greeks. Such had probably been his intended policy when he embarked on his career; but such

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a policy was rendered impracticable by the vastness of his conquests. Little Greece could not permanently hold down all Asia by material pressure. But, as a presiding mind, it might, even under conditions of equality, lift it up, wield the mass, and rule by not claiming to rule. He doubtless knew that in hellenizing the East he incurred a risk of partially orientalizing the West; but not to have faced such a danger would have been to relinquish the greatest enterprise which had ever presented itself to the imagination of warrior or statesman.

Mr. Grote remarks that Alexander's character was not pre-eminently Greek; nay, that he was but slightly touched by national sympathies. National, he was not; because his being and his aims alike were imperial. The Greece to which he considered himself as belonging was that of Achilles and the kings who fought against Troy:—republican Greece belonged to him, and he despised its sophists, its orators, and its talkers. Thus far he had something in common with Napoleon; but he was without Napoleon's untruthfulness, his selfishness, and his littlenesses.

Bishop Thirlwall's estimate of Alexander appears far more philosophical and just. It recognizes him



as "great, not merely in the vast compass, and the persevering ardour of his ambition; nor in the qualities by which he was enabled to gratify it, and to crowd so many memorable actions within so short a period; but in the course which his ambition took, in the collateral aims which ennobled and purified it, so that it almost grew into one with the highest of which man is capable, the desire of knowledge, and the love of good. . . . It may be truly asserted, that his was the first of the great monarchies founded in Asia that opened a prospect of progressive improvement, and not of continual degradation to its subjects: it was the first that contained any element of moral and intellectual progress,"<sup>1</sup>

This is high praise: nor is it undeserved. The severest of the accusations brought against Alexander relates to the death of Philotas and Parmenio. But these two cases stand wholly apart, and must be separately judged. Philotas by his own confession—a confession made before he was put to the torture, had received distinct information of a plot against the king's life, and up to the moment when the murder was to be per-

<sup>1</sup> "History of Greece," vol. vii. p. 109, 111 (1840).

petrated he had never divulged it, either to the king with whom he was in constant intercourse, or to any other person; neither apparently had he taken any steps, during three whole days, to ascertain whether his information was correct, or to frustrate the crime. He alleged that he regarded the plot as an idle rumour. The credit due to that defence depended on the estimate in which his character was held. That estimate was low: his sharp tongue had done much to alienate the army from Alexander, who had made him commander of the horse-guard, a position which brought him close to the royal person, and who had maintained him in that place, though not without just cause for distrusting him. His ostentation and selfishness had made him an object of general dislike; and his loyalty had been in question at the time of the pretender Amyntas. At an early period of the trial he had been denounced by his own brother-in-law as a traitor, and a parricide; and he had been condemned after the ordinary forms of trial by the military assembly—a tribunal, as Curtius states, to whose authority even the king owed great deference, and whose impartiality derives a serious attestation from the fact, that

after its sentence on Philotas it acquitted the sons of Andromenes, accused of complicity with him, though the king in person had appeared as their prosecutor, and though the flight of Polemo, one of their number, had confirmed the suspicions entertained against them. It is difficult then to see why Alexander should be condemned either for ordering the trial or approving the sentence, especially considering how often he had been censured for reckless contempt of his own life, both in the battle field and when endangered by conspiracies. Curtius expressly states that when Alexander heard first that Philotas had conspired against him, he entirely believed in his guilt, though subsequently shaken in that belief for a time by the protestations and tears of the accused.

But the case of Parmenio is a far different one. His letter, discovered among his son's papers, was vague, although to one already convinced of that son's guilt it must have seemed to indicate participation in the crime. The confession of Parmenio's share in the plot, made by Philotas, was ample, but it was made under torture; and as such, a doubt could not but rest on it, not-

withstanding that tortures often failed to extort confessions (as in the conspiracy of the royal Pages), and although, as the Bishop remarks, "according to the prejudices of that age, those which then prevailed in the most civilized nation of the earth, and which have been but slowly and partially dissipated by the light which we enjoy, no evidence was so trustworthy as that which was elicited by torture." Even if Parmenio's guilt had been certain, Alexander should never have forgotten that the aged warrior had been his father's nearest friend, and, next to him, the great builder up of the Macedonian kingdom. The death of Parmenio may have appeared a great political necessity, but it was not the less the one great blot on Alexander's life, as pride was the one great vice in his character.

Some writers have been eloquent upon Alexander's supposed intemperance. But Arrian says, "As to the pleasures which regard the body, he showed himself indifferent; as to the desires of the mind, insatiable." He has been also accused of ostentation; yet against petty vanities Alexander would have found a protection in his pride, if in nothing better, and Arrian is doubtless right in

the remark that "his assuming and wearing the Persian habit seems to have been done with a political view, that he might appear not altogether to despise the barbarians, and that he might also have some curb to the arrogance and insolence of his Macedonians. And for this cause, I am of opinion, he placed the Persian Melophori among his Macedonian troops, and squadrons of horse, and allowed them the same share of honour. Long banquets and deep drinking, Aristobulus assures us, "were none of his delights."

The death of Cleitus is a theme which has been worn threadbare by schoolboys bent upon pointing a moral. Their generalization has been a hasty one. On that occasion, indeed, Alexander and Cleitus were both of them heated by wine. Cleitus had been pertinaciously and extravagantly insolent, and the king, in a paroxysm of anger, struck him through with a spear. Cleitus fell dead, and Alexander, who was only by force restrained from killing himself, remained for three days alone, and without food, denouncing himself as the murderer of his friends. To his generals the king's remorse for an act not premeditated, and only accidentally fatal, must have appeared

more remarkable than his crime; for so severely did they condemn the impertinence of Cleitus, that but for Alexander's interference they would have refused to his body the funeral rites—a decision, of course, which may, or may not, have proceeded from servility. While Alexander hid himself in his lonely despair, the Greek soothsayers arrived at an opportune discovery. On the day of the revel, the festival of the Dioscuri had chanced to synchronize with that of Dionysus: the king had given the preference to the “Twins of Jove,” and the Wine-god in wrath had sent upon him a divine phrensy. Alexander, whose rage of grief had perhaps exhausted itself, or had begun to give way to the claims of empire, was pleased to accept this apology for his disastrous passion, tendered to him, as it was, with a modest confidence, and by persons of consideration. He rose from the earth and resumed his march.

It cannot be denied that, although on several occasions Alexander was magnanimous in the forgiveness of injuries, he was on others, if not deliberately cruel, yet criminally reckless in the shedding of blood. But the one great vice in his heroic character was pride—that all-per-

vading vice which, except in the rarest instances, blended itself like a poison with pagan greatness, and penetrated into its essence. It was not the virtuous but the godlike that Alexander ever affected, for he esteemed himself a god upon earth. In him the greatest of faults waxed larger as his triumphs advanced, and became dilated to the measure of his greatness. For such a fault he would be lightly judged by a pagan estimate; and Arrian writes: "I cannot condemn Alexander for endeavouring to draw his subjects into the belief of his divine original, nor be induced to believe it any great crime, because 'tis very reasonable to imagine he intended no more by it than merely to procure the greater authority among his soldiers. Neither was he less famous than Minos, or Æacus, or Rhadamanthus, who all of them challenged kindred with Jove."<sup>1</sup> Pride seems to have been not so much a quality in Alexander, as a primary constituent of his being. If he despised the inferior appetites, as Plutarch affirms, it was because "they reminded him," like sleep, "of his mortality." If he paid honour to the gods

<sup>1</sup> "Arrian's History," translated by Mr. Rooke, vol. ii. p. 188,  
1729

it was because he regarded them as members of his royal family, his cousins of Olympus. He respected Diogenes because when the philosopher of the tub requested the youthful king to step from between him and the sun, he recognized a pride equal to his own. Alexander's one human affection did not escape the alloy, and the insatiable grief and the insatiable ambition came from the same unmeasured self-will. These are the offences which invite retribution, and which constitute the tragic in human character. Moralists need not be curious to hunt after additional faults. There are faults that exclude lesser faults, which, if added to them, would be but the addition of minus quantities.

Alexander died at Babylon, before he had completed his thirty-third year, while engaged on the restoration of that first and worst seat of Empire, the by-word of that domination which is from below. To him it had been given to destroy, or rather to absorb, the Persian Empire (as it, in its day, had absorbed the Babylonian, and the Babylonian the earlier Assyrian), that Persian Empire whose nobles, the chivalry of the old world, had once made their boast of truth, not gold ; whose kings had revered religion, not patronized and enslaved



it; and whose worship hadnot, like that of Egypt, lost itself in allegory, andsacerdotalism, nor, like that of Greece, materialized piercing thoughts and primeval traditions in beautiful idolatries. But the Empire which Alexander had resolved to create was that of the whole world. Had he lived he must have created it. The Romans, whose legions with difficulty resisted the phalanx when wielded by Pyrrhus of Epirus, must have sunk, despite the patriotic confidence of Livy, before the Conqueror. The imperial series would then have been far otherwise completed: the consummating empire, which resumed all its predecessors, inheriting their gifts, and exaggerating at once their good and their evil, the virtues that win power, and the earthly aim that degrades it, would have been an empire of Intellect, not of Law; and over its subject-realms would have been scattered, not Roman municipalities, but Greek schools. The Greek intellect, predominately speculative, had spent itself upon art and science. Wedded in Alexander with the barbaric Macedonian robustness, happily reserved, it had at last become practical also; and what it could effect, thus perfected, ten years had shown. The rest would have been

shown, had ten years more, been accorded. But it was not to be. Alexander was not to tread the banks of the Tiber, nor to look on the Alban mount. It had been otherwise decreed by—

“ . . . that high Providence which did preserve  
Through Scipio the world's empery for Rome.”<sup>1</sup>

He had to die.

That which has been, doubtless conduced best, though its fruit has been of slow growth, to the development of the human destinies. The Greek dominion has not been lost to man : it has been a dominion of mind ; and a primary condition of its full realization was, probably, the extinction, not the extension, of its political greatness. Alexander had aspired to give to one small spot on earth's surface, Greece, a power extending over the earth, and to Mind a temporal dominion which, being a universal one, as well as the creation of human ambition, must have proved but a splendid prison-house, not a guarantee for freedom and strength. But there existed a region, smaller even than Greece, to which had been awarded a sceptre stronger than either arms or mere intellect can bestow, a spiritual sceptre, and a kingdom founded on the soul. It too had had its wars

<sup>1</sup> Cary's "Dante.

among brethren, and its vicissitudes, its commonwealth and its kings, its teachers and its Book. It too had had its sins ; it too was to put on the penitential robe and vanish for a time ; yet in it had been sown the seed of a dominion, even now young, compared with which the wealth of Babylon and the wisdom of Egypt alike were small things, and to which Greece and Rome had been successive ministers. Alexander had trodden the Holy Land. He had stood in the Temple of Jerusalem. His visit to it was not recorded by his Greek historians, and it is easy to understand the reasons for which he would probably have commanded them to leave it unrecorded. The reverence which the proudest of earth's conquerors had shown for a despised race would have injured him alike, for different reasons, with Greek and with Persian, with Chaldean and Phœnician—with the pride of Intellect, and the pride of Empire, with the devotee of the senses, and the trader bent but on gain. But Alexander's visit to Jerusalem has its place in the "Antiquities" of Josephus :—it was not the least memorable among the incidents of his memorable career.

*May 4th, 1874.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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### GREEKS.

ALEXANDER.

HEPHESTION, his friend.

PARMENIO, the old General of King Philip.

PHILOTAS, son of Parmenio.

ANTIGONUS, afterwards King of Asia Minor.

CASSANDER, afterwards King of Macedonia.

PTOLEMY, Historian of the War, afterwards King of Egypt.

SELEUCUS, afterwards King of Syria and Asia to the Indus.

PERDICCAS,	}	Generals.
CRATERUS,		
PEUCESTAS,		
AMYNTAS,		
SOCRATES,		

EUMENES, Secretary to Alexander.

ANTISTHENES, a Rhetorician.

PHYLAX, a Physician.

Soldiers, Messengers, a Page.

## EASTERNS.

DARIUS, King of Persia.

ARTABAZUS,        }  
ARSITES,            } Satraps of Persian Provinces.

ASTAR, a Magian.

The JEWISH HIGH PRIEST.

MEMNON, a Rhodian commanding the army of Darius.

A CHALDÆAN PRIEST.

AZELMICUS, King of Tyre.

HANNO,                }  
ASDRUBAL,            }  
ITHOCLES,            } Senators of Tyre.  
HAMILCAR,            }

CALANUS, an Indian Brahmin.

## WOMEN.

SISYGAMBIS, mother of Darius.

The QUEEN of Persia, wife of Darius.

ARSINOE, his daughter.

AMASTRIS, her cousin.

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# ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Shore at Sestos.*

PARMENIO, PHILOTAS, CASSANDER, PTOLEMY.

---

PARMENIO.

Arrived in time : our transports, there they lie !  
Embark the troops ! He throws on me the tasks  
That warinèss demand. Calas, yon tide  
Will try the nerves of your Thessalian steeds,  
And point their boding ears.

PHILOTAS.

Nicanor, mark !

Sea-born Abydos beckons us with smile  
Saucy as Hero's. Death is death, or else  
I'd have Leander's luck.

/i

B

*Alexander the Great.*

PARMENIO.

In this, my sons,  
Our visionary prince shows fair ensample :  
Glory he woos, not Pleasure.

PTOLEMY.

Glory, or Empire ?  
For these are twain.

PARMENIO.

And which he most affects,  
Then when your chronicle is writ and ended  
The Athenian dialectic shall resolve.  
Old Macedon, by Greeks barbaric styled,  
Thank thou thy gods, and, after them, thy snows,  
The strong heart still is thine !

CASSANDER.

How those huge galleys  
Dash the dark wave to silver ! Sails the king ?

PARMENIO.

What know I of the king ? He sits in Persia.

CASSANDER.

I meant the Macedonian.

*Alexander the Great.*

3

PARMENIO.

Alexander ?

Then call him by his name. A babe, I danced him ;  
A child, before me held him on my horse :  
Too old am I to orientalize.

PTOLEMY.

He owes you much.

PARMENIO.

A realm his father owed me,  
And knew it well. The son is reverent too,  
But with a difference, sir. In Philip's time  
My voice was Delphic on the battle-field :  
This young man taps the springs of my experience  
As though with water to allay his wine  
Of keener inspirations. "Speak thy thought,  
Parmenio !" Ere my words are half way out  
He nods approval, or he smiles dissent.  
Still, there is like him none ! I marvell'd oft  
To see him breast that tempest from the north,  
Drowning revolt in the Danubian wave.  
The foe in sight, instant he knew their numbers ;  
If distant, guess'd their whereabouts—how lay  
The intermediate tract—if fordable  
The streams—the vales accessible to horse :  
'Twas like the craft of beasts remote from man.



PHILOTAS.

Father, you ever boast the king reveres you ;  
I say, he flouts you in the army's face :  
You rail ; but still he conquers.

PARMENIO.

Son, 'tis so ;  
Young gamesters have their luck.

PHILOTAS.

Daily he slights you,  
And me for your sake. Yestereve he passed me,  
(His hand was heavy on Hephestion's shoulder,  
The Phalanx saw it, and the Silver Shields)  
Vouchsafing me no word.

---

SCENE II.—*Troy.*

ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, SELEUCUS, CRATERUS,  
CITIZENS, PRIESTS.

---

CRATERUS.

He likes not Troy. His gaze, that's onward ever,  
Like gaze of one that watches for the dawn,  
Is bent to the earth.

SELEUCUS.

Far other beam'd it late,  
When, in mid channel, lifting high the bowl,  
He poured to great Poseidon and the nymphs  
Their dues ; far other when abroad he flung,  
Nighing the shore, his spear that shook for gladness,  
Rooted in Asia's soil !

TROJAN CITIZEN.

Great King of Greeks !  
Welcome ! Atrides treads once more in Troy !

ALEXANDER.

Where is Achilles' fane—mine ancestor's ?  
I see it not.

TROJAN PRIEST.

No fanes stand here to mortals.

ALEXANDER.

Aye, mortal was his sire. His arms, where are they ?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ulysses won them by the Greeks' decree.

ALEXANDER.

The Greeks ! I knew you Phrygian by your garb  
And medicated voice. Whose fane is that ?

SECOND CITIZEN.

'Tis Aphrodite's, sire, that won the prize  
On yonder Ida.

ALEXANDER.

Aye, your Aphrodite !  
She that, the Helena among the gods—  
I ever scorn'd that son of hers, Æneas :  
But for his mother's veil around him flung  
Tydides' hand had slain him. Troy consumed,  
Where fled he ?

TROIAN PRIEST.

First to Carthage ; next to Rome :  
He founded there a State.

ALEXANDER.

A fugitive  
Then founded what a bandit horde built up :  
The twain were aptly yoked. That State shall crumble.  
Whose fane is this ? 'tis small, but fair.

TROJAN PRIEST.

Athenè's.

ALEXANDER.

A man may enter this, and unashamed :  
What arms are those that shine from yonder wall ?

TROJAN PRIEST.

The arms of Greeks who died at Troy.

ALEXANDER.

Remove them !

Into whatever battle-field I ride,  
Those arms shall go before me. Where they hang  
Suspend the panoply I wear. Athenè,  
This night 'tis dedicate to thee.

A TROJAN CITIZEN.

Great king !

Behold the boast of Troy ! My kindred guard it—  
The lyre of Helen's husband !

ALEXANDER.

Mark, Hephestion,

The legend-mongers at their work ! 'Twas thus  
They forged in Macedon that tale preposterous,

Scandalous alike to me and to my mother,  
Touching great Zeus. Juggler, your lyre's a lie !  
Show it to girls ! I seek Achilles' tomb.  
Hephestion, be thou with me. Sirs, farewell.

[ALEXANDER *and* HEPHESTION *walk on together.*]

ALEXANDER.

My master oft-times, the wise Stagyrite,  
Condemn'd the Passions, branded them as a yoke  
Which Action's strenuous sons should scorn to bear,  
And chiefly praised the Tragic Muse for this,  
That, showing these as monsters, she with fire  
Of Pity and Terror cleanses the clear soul  
Above the Passions lifted. This is Troy !  
Dreamland ends here.

HEPHESTION.

Alas ! how small an urn  
Suffices for the earth-o'erstriding dust  
Which one time shook the world !

ALEXANDER.

Must they too shrink,  
Simois, and yon Scamander ? Children ford  
The flood that drown'd Greek warriors. Here the Sphinx

Makes banquet large : her riddle's hard to read.  
That ten years' war, what fruit thereof remains ?  
What empire lives, its witness and its crown ?  
What shall we say ? That those were common men  
Made large by mists of Time ? Or shall we rather  
Conclude them real, and our age a fraud :—  
Determine that in them old Homer saw  
Some greatness hidden from the blinded herd ;  
Some far result foresaw ?

HEPHESTION.

Sir, from Achilles

Descendeth not Olympias ?

ALEXANDER.

Aye.

HEPHESTION.

Through her

The spirit of the Strong Ones came on you :  
My answer thus I make. The Trojan War  
Begins its work decreed—in you begins it :  
It makes not end in ashes and a song :  
The empire you shall found must stand its witness.  
But hush ! Tread softly. Lo, the grassy mound,  
The head-stone o'er it !

## ALEXANDER

*(Anointing the pillar on the grave of ACHILLES).*

Mighty Sire, Achilles !

Lift from the dimness of the dolorous realm  
Thy face upon thy son ! In it—I see it—  
Survives, though sad, the unvanquishable youth ;  
In it alone. The phantom of a spear  
Is all that now can weight that phantom hand  
Which awed the Atridæ ; and as though chain-bound  
Move the swift feet that once outsped thy mother's  
Bounding from wave to wave. Yet, not the less,  
Monarch thou walkest. 'Mid the strengthless heads  
That, reverent, round thee flock—like thee lamenting,  
Despite the embalm'd purpureal airs, and gleam  
Immeasurable of amaranthine meads,  
The keen, reviving, strenuous airs of earth,  
And blasts from battle-fields ; like thee detesting  
That frustrate, stagnant, ineffectual bourne  
Where substance melts to shadow—lift, great king,  
Once more from out the gloom a face sun-bright,  
Elysium's wonder, on thy son's, and hear him :  
To thee this day he consecrates his greatness :  
Whate'er malign and intercepting, Death  
Detracted from thy greatness he concedes thee ;  
Remands thee from the gulf the deed unborn ;

*Alexander the Great.*

11

Yields thee, ere won, his victory and his empire :  
This is the anointing, this the sacrifice,  
Wherewith he crowns thy tomb. [After a pause.]  
The night descends.  
Hephestion, I depart.

[HEPHESTION remains, crowns the pillar on the grave  
of PATROCLUS, and rejoins ALEXANDER.]

ALEXANDER.

You tarried :—wherefore ?

HEPHESTION.

For justice's sake, and friendship's. Is there room  
For nothing, then, but greatness on the earth ?  
I crown'd that other tomb.

ALEXANDER.

What tomb ?

HEPHESTION.

It stood  
Close by, the loftier ;—greater love had raised it ;—  
Patroclus' tomb.

ALEXANDER.

'Tis strange I marked it not.

HEPHESTION.

These two were friends.



ALEXANDER.

Aye ; nor in death divided.

HEPHESTION.

Therefore, despite that insolent sect, the gods  
Are provident for things on earth.

ALEXANDER.

Hephestion !

That which Patroclus to Achilles was  
Art thou to me—my nearest and mine inmost.  
In them, not lives alone, but fates were join'd  
Patroclus died—Achilles follow'd soon.  
But lo, that glare ! Abydos glances forth  
Through the olive-copse far off. A thousand wrinkles  
Even now run up Parmenio's wintry brows,  
Shaping our battle's scheme. It rests not with him ;  
Yet be it his in fancy !

---

SCENE III.—*The Palace at Susa.*

*The QUEEN OF PERSIA.*

---

THE QUEEN.

The morn is stiller than the night. How sweetly  
The green of yon tall garden-trees o'erlays  
Those golden bars of stationary light

That cut the marbles of the palace floor !  
How pleasant, too, that fount's monotonous chime,  
Wakening the self-same echoes in the courts  
They heard in bygone years ! May no change come !  
[*The royal children enter.*]

ARSINOE.

Here is a lily, mother, pluck'd at dawn :  
The dews were on it thick ; upon the dews  
I laid my kiss, because for you 'twas destined :  
Now dews and kiss are gone !

THE QUEEN.

The dews lie yet  
Bright on your curls ; I drop my kiss upon them :  
My flower no rude hand pluck ! You caught, I think,  
The Spring asleep, and caged it in your bosom ;  
Its songsters waken there.

A YOUNGER CHILD.

Mother ! We found  
A plant that wore for blossoms butterflies :  
We clapp'd our hands to fright them, but they moved not !

THE QUEEN.

No butterflies I see ; but these warm hands  
Are more to me. This is your father's birthday.  
He has heard ill tidings.

ARSINOE.

Tidings ! I remember  
Gardeners we heard that mock'd some rumour strange :  
They said that pirates from an isle far off  
Which one time had been liegeful to our Persia,  
Wild men who drag their living from sea-waves,  
By hunger roused to wrath had flung themselves  
In war against mankind. We'll sell our gems,  
And bid them purchase bread.

THE QUEEN.

Their king invades us :  
From hill to hill our watch-fires flashed the news.

ARSINOE.

I thought all kings were righteous, kind, paternal !  
How old may be his kingdom ?

THE QUEEN.

'Tis a realm  
Novel, yet proud ; made up of rocks and vales,  
With here and there a field where corn can grow ;  
'Tis smaller than our smallest Persian province.

*ASTAR, a Magian, entering.*

Gone mad at last ! They've much to make them mad !

They're mad with false philosophies, and schemes  
For building cloudy fabrics, brief as clouds,  
Which Politics they style. They're mad, beside,  
With orators that rouse to tempest mood  
The popular sea wrath-ridden. They're madder yet  
With rival altars and with warring gods  
More bestial than themselves. Their Greece lay long  
Prone in her intertangled, blind republics,  
A knot of serpents glistening in the sun :  
This day, too late in Alexander raised,  
She stands erect—to die.

ARSINOE.

Can nothing save them ?

ASTAR.

In three weeks more, their heads from Susa's walls  
Will frown against the sun.

ARSINOE.

Not so ! Not so !

'Twere shame to deal with misery thus. We're strong :  
The sound must needs compassionate the sick :  
The wise protect the weak. Ah me, I babble.

THE QUEEN.

Because your sisters and your headstrong brother

Their Intercessor name you, and because  
Your little flock salute you Little Mother,  
You'd throw your veil above a rebel race,  
And hide them from their doom !

ARSINOE.

Plead for them, mother !

Our aged Sisygambis too shall plead :  
Her heart is great.

THE QUEEN.

She walk'd a lioness once ;  
But since her brethren fell she's changed : there's in her  
A tremor like the tremor in a tree  
Which staggers o'er the axe. Three nights, moreover,  
She's vision-rack'd. She saw a portent wing'd  
That storm-like from the West, against the storm,  
Made way, and smote the East.

ASTAR.

The silver altars

Lift, day and night, that ever-living flame  
The witness, though unbodied, visible,  
Of Him, that Spirit all-piercing, girdling all things,  
All-quickenning like the sun, though seal'd from sense  
Lest man should see and die. His hand alone  
Shines, lightning-like, through error of man's night,

Cleansing base shapes, or else, with happier change  
Of dissolution glorious, raising high  
And throning in clear skies. Great Persian Realm !  
Whose stable basis is the strength of man,  
Whose height his hope ; within whose sea-like breadth  
The storms but wrestle on the lap of calm ;  
The vigil of whose worship draws to earth  
Her peace ; whose centuries, misnamed of slumber,  
Are fruitfuller to man than cyclic dreams  
Of seeming-wakeful nations, all whose life  
Is lodged in foot and tongue ; great Persian Realm !  
Let the fly buzz upon thy wall world-wide,  
The viper creep unheeded till it reaches  
Thy trampling heel.

[*An acclaim is heard without.*]

THE QUEEN.

That sound might wake the dead !  
The king returns : his people flock to meet him.

---

SCENE IV.—*The Western side of the Granicus. The Greek  
Army approaches it.*

ALEXANDER, PARMENIO, and other GENERALS.

---

PARMENIO.

The crown of courage, boy, is self-restraint

When clamourers goad us. Pitch thy camp. They'll fly :  
At dawn we pass the flood unquestion'd.

ALEXANDER.

Greeks !

To the water's edge !

(To PARMENIO.)

The morning sun would daze us :  
This hour it spites the foe.

SCENE V.—*The Eastern bank of the Granicus.*

*The Persian Army commanded by MEMNON. With him  
are SPITHRIDATES, Satrap of Lydia, ARSITES,  
Satrap of Phrygia, and others.*

MEMNON.

There's the famed Phalanx—by yon river's side—  
Place opposite the horse ; in them we're strongest :  
Arsites, with your Phrygians guard yon bank :  
Keep the south marge ; nor threat them till they're  
crossing :  
Then welcome them with javelins.

ARSITES.

I misdoubt

Our Grecian mercenaries.

MEMNON.

They will fight  
If hearten'd by the event, or anger'd. Place them  
On yonder rearward hill. The odds are with us.

---

SCENE VI.—*The Western bank of the Granicus.*

ALEXANDER and his GENERALS.

---

PARMENIO.

Come what come may, this battle should be lost !  
A chance may save it, or the gods may save it :—  
By laws of war this battle should be lost.

ALEXANDER.

You're sure of that ?

PARMENIO.

Here all things are against us ;  
The stream is swollen with April-melted snows ;  
Treacherous the banks ; infrequent are the fords  
And shifting made by eddies. Alexander,  
You fight not here with Thracians. Mark yon mount !  
Nor Dacian there, nor Moesian rules the war :



Old Rhodian Memnon sets his teeth, and knots  
The tangle of his wiles to lash you homewards :  
See him there gather'd on his war-horse staid,  
That 'mid those trivial prancers knows to stand ;  
Firm-set he sits, crook-kneed, with hand o'er eyes  
That slowly take their survey of the field,  
A man that deals with war in the way of business.  
Lo, there, he hurls his horsemen forth in squadrons !  
Your Phalanx next must cross the flood. What then ?  
The uneven ground will loose their wedged array  
Like a spread hedgehog.

## ALEXANDER.

Shake our standard forth !  
Let sound the trumpets ! Send our battle down,  
The Macedonian and Pæonian horse,  
And infantry light-arm'd, upon the right ;  
And on the left the Thracian ; in the centre  
Our moving fortress, fenced with brazen walls,  
Our Phalanx inexpugnable. Amyntas,  
See it march, slanting, up the river's bed :  
Already hath it served us. Persia's horse  
Forms opposite, beguiled, on broken ground,  
That shall not serve them. March with shields high  
holden,  
For turning of their shafts.

SCENE VII.—*The Eastern bank of the Granicus.*

*The Hypaspists, SELEUCUS, and CASSANDER.*

---

CASSANDER.

We've left the waves behind ; the worst is over !  
Their shafts are straws, but these our spears have weight :  
Thrust them into their faces ! So— 'tis well :  
Spoil their fine looks, and spite their Asian brides :  
Beat out Arabia's unguents from their curls :  
Spare not the gem-wrought corselet !

SELEUCUS.

Alexander

Cried thus,—“ My brave Hypaspists landed once,  
The fight is fought, and won !” I heard him speak it !  
Have at thee, silken Syrian ! Next for thee,  
Bactrian or Mede !

CASSANDER.

How long it takes in crossing !  
The Phalanx boasts itself a tortoise mail'd :  
It moves as slowly.  
[*He falls, wounded by an arrow.*]

SELEUCUS.

Well charged, Pæonian horse ! That charge has saved us !  
Good friends, this blood is Persia's more than mine ;

Pray gods it enter not my veins, and taint them  
With cowardice of Persia !

A SOLDIER.

Hark ! it thunders !

[*The Persian cavalry comes up, headed by MITHRIDATES,  
and at the same moment ALEXANDER from the  
opposite side.*]

ALEXANDER

(*Striking down MITHRIDATES with his spear*).

Give that to thy great cousin, King Darius !

RHŒSACES

(*Smiting ALEXANDER on the helmet, which bursts asunder*).

Hail ! Philip's son !

ALEXANDER.

Well aim'd, and nigh the mark !

From Philip this !

[*Pierces his breast; SPITHRIDATES, riding up from  
behind, has just raised his sword above ALEX-  
ANDER'S head, when CLEITUS severs his arm with  
a sword-cut.*]

'Twas timely ; Lanice

Shall thank her brother Cleitus for that stroke ;  
Else had she mourn'd her foster-child.

*[The Phalanx pushes against the Persian centre, which bends inward. The disorder gradually reaches the extremities of the Persian line, and the Macedonian cavalry breaks through its weaker parts. The left wing, under PARMENIO, charges. The whole Persian army falls into rout.]*

ALEXANDER.

The field is ours! Persia to Parthian changes!  
After them, Thracian horse; but not too far!  
Drive them some twenty stadia; wheeling then,  
Take in the rear those Grecian mercenaries:  
At them in front, strong Phalanx! close them round  
Northward with your Hypaspists, brave Seleucus!  
These are the Greeks that sold their Greece for gold:  
Grant others mercy; let no traitor live!  
How now, Parmenio? Is it their strategy  
That feigns this politic flight?

PARMENIO.

Sir, all the gods  
Ride in the train of your triumphant fortune,  
And hold the gold-cloth o'er your head ablaze;  
For your sake they reverse all laws of war:  
I said they might.

EUMENES.

Our horse has lost but sixty :  
The victory's cheap.

ALEXANDER.

With obsequies of kings  
See they be honour'd. Of their kith and kin  
No man, while Greece is Greece, shall subject stand  
To civil tax or toll.

PTOLEMY.

Two thousand prisoners—

ALEXANDER.

We'll not forget them. Let them sweat, foot-chained,  
In cities both of Macedon and Greece.

EUMENES.

The body-guard have lost but twenty-five.

ALEXANDER.

Write on thy tablets, statues we decree them  
In Pella raised : Lysippus be the sculptor.  
With funeral rites we grace the Persian dead :  
They battled for their king. Three hundred suits  
Of armour from those stone-cold warriors stripp'd,

To Athens send : upon the Acropolis  
Be they suspended, in Athenë's fane,  
With this inscription 'neath them :—" Alexander,  
The son of Philip, when the Persian host  
Fell at Granicus, sent to Greece this spoil :  
The Grecians help to take it, save alone  
The men of Lacedemon." Grave it in marble.

EUMENES.

It shall be so ordain'd.

ALEXANDER.

Hephestion, send  
To Ilium's maiden fane our noblest spoils :  
Let Ilium bear henceforth a city's name.

MITHRINES, *the governor of Sardis, arriving.*

Sardis submits, before her king low laying  
The keys of her great treasury.

ALEXANDER.

Tell me, sir,  
How many factions rage there in your city?

MITHRINES.

Two, mighty king, the nobles and the people :  
The nobles rule.

## ALEXANDER.

Their rule is over-ruled :

We prop the weaker ; they shall need us most.  
Proclaim to Sardis that all privileges  
By Persia from her ravish'd, we to her  
Revindicate. To Ephesian Artemis,  
A goddess friendly still to Macedon,  
Whose temple at our birth-hour fell by fire,  
We shall be helpful likewise. Ephesus  
Herself by penitence shall purge that wrong  
Done to my father's statue. Tell those realms  
Betwixt the Euxine and Pamphylian seas,  
That Grecian galaxy of Lesser Asia,  
That Argive choir in eastern exile sad,  
That Doric garland on base Persia's brow,  
We came not here to crush them, but exalt :  
This hand shall lift them to their first estate,  
And lodge them 'mid the skyey heights of Greece.  
Let it be noised abroad. Lords, I attend you.

---

SCENE VIII.—*Near the Granicus.*

PHILOTAS, ANTISTHENES.

---

PHILOTAS.

To me alone he spake no word of honour :—  
Is that Hephestion's malice, or his own ?

ANTISTHENES.

His own. This king is valued past his worth :  
I join'd his march to write his deeds, and note  
He deigns to touch no book save blind old Homer.  
He nothing says that's sage, like Ptolemy,  
Or keen-edged, like Craterus. This I grant him,  
Sagacity supreme in observation :  
He sees with eye inspired. Seeing with him,  
Is Act and Thought, not sense.

PHILOTAS.

'Twas said of old,  
" Philip Parmenio is : " there were that cried  
In Thrace, " What's Alexander but Philotas ! "  
Yet this is he that scorns me ! All save life  
I'd peril for revenge.

ANTISTHENES.

Nor valour here,  
Nor learning meets reward. But this remember,  
Scheming, or acting, place Parmenio first ;  
He's rooted in the popular mind so deep  
No storm can shake him. Be it whisper'd still,  
" Parmenio frown'd," " Parmenio disapproved,"  
" Parmenio censured much the young man's rashness : "



When comes reverse the king shall bear the brunt ;  
Parmenio fill his throne.

PHILOTAS.

I hear of plots.

ANTISTHENES.

Hear, heed, and hide ; but help not. Wait, and win ;  
Let others run the risk.

PHILOTAS.

You'll meet at supper

Phylax, my leech.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Sea-cliff opposite New Tyre.*

---

ALEXANDER (*alone*).

Wings without body ! Such—no more—is Commerce  
Which rests not upon Empire ! Commerce, ruling,  
Disperses man's chief energies, but ruled  
By spirit heroic, increase yields of thoughts  
That give to greatness wider basis. Tyre !  
How soon thy golden feathers forth shall fly  
Upon the storm of War ! Lo, where she sits  
Upon her rock, wave-girt, and turret-crown'd,  
Forth gazing t'ward her western daughter, Carthage !—  
Tyre of the ships ! Phœnicia gave us letters,  
Which are to mind as fingers to the hand,  
And shape, dividing, Thought's articulate world :—  
Men stumble thus on glories not for them,  
The rightful appanage of the capable.

The Empire I shall found shall tread the earth,  
Yet over it go flying. From its vans  
The twin-born beams of Grecian Song and Science  
Shall send perpetual dawn. Hephestion, welcome !

HEPHESTION (*joining him*).

How long you gaze on yonder beaming sea !  
It burns mine eyes like fire.

ALEXANDER.

It gladdens mine,  
Being irradiate and illimitable.  
Hephestion, hold this map,—the sea-wind curls it—  
We'll find my City's site.

[*After a pause.*]

Not Babylon,  
Not Nineveh : Persepolis stands too far :  
Ecbatana's nought, and Susa's Persian only :  
Byzantium well might serve if north were all.  
In Egypt is the spot. 'Tis here ! 'Tis here !  
Westward, beyond Pelusium. There the Euxine  
Thaws in the hot winds from the Arabian Gulf :  
There meet the east and west : dusk Indian kings  
Thither shall send their ivory and their gold,  
And thence to far Hesperia.

HEPHESTION.

I can see it :

Hard by Canobus stretches, long and thin,  
Sharp, like an adder's tongue, a promontory—

ALEXANDER.

It guards the region's harbour, one and sole :  
Thereon shall rest my world's great diadem :  
On Alexandria's quays Greek and Egyptian  
Shall join in traffic : through the populous streets  
My Phalanx shall return from conquer'd lands ;  
There shall old Egypt lisp our Grecian tongue ;  
The Phidian hand subdue the hieroglyph ;  
Athenè share with Isis ! Hail, Seleucus !  
A cloud is on your countenance.

SELEUCUS (*arriving*).

Alexander !

I've fought your battles, and I love you inly,  
But fawn on no man's follies. What is this ?  
Shall soldiers sweat and toil like beasts of burthen,  
And I their task-master to pare the wage ?  
Month after month they toil, this causeway making  
'Twixt Ancient Tyre and New. Where mules and asses  
Went staggering first, now stumble those brave steeds  
That chased the flying foe.

ALEXANDER.

'Tis well : three stadia  
The causeway's made. Remains to make the fourth :  
That done, we reach the gates of Tyre, and knock.

SELEUCUS.

The fourth is thrice the three for time and labour :  
We're now in deepening water : from its rock  
Yon city's walls ascend two hundred palms :  
Their arrows gall us : on their towers they raise  
Huge furnaces.

ALEXANDER.

Seleucus, all is cared for ;  
Two thousand arms have striven three days and more  
In controversy with the centuried pine  
On Libanus ; in four my towers shall stand  
High as their towers, and make them large reply.  
Return, my friend. Tell them their king, ere long,  
Will lead them into Tyre.

SELEUCUS (*departing*).

Silenced men

Retain, not less, their thoughts.

ALEXANDER.

Mark you, Hephestion,  
They're in one tale, Seleucus and the rest :

Parmenio hates this march to Tyre and Egypt :  
His mind grows leaner than the threaded sails  
Of yonder bark, so worn, the wind goes through them :  
It holds no thought that's new. That man I count  
My danger chief. I play a desperate game ;  
Need dauntless friends : with cavils and with doubts  
My soldiers' hearts he freezes.

## HEPHESTION.

Old Parmenio  
Is spleenful when he thinks : he's best in action.

## ALEXANDER.

I, who defer not easily to facts  
Which cross my purpose, see them when they're plain :  
Those which confront me reason of themselves.  
Demosthenes, the wonder-working voice,  
In Athens roars against me. Lacedæmon  
Pushes her horn, dull Agis, at my sides :  
Strong-hearted Thebes remembers. In old time  
'Mid many kings sufficed but one Thersites ;  
Therein, methinks, great Homer show'd his wit ;  
Those States are, each, Thersites windier grown,  
The monarch sole among them I. If Persia  
Should join with those, and fire the world behind me,  
Advance were hard ; impossible retreat.

Therefore from Persia cleave I Tyre and Egypt,  
Their ports, their ships, harbours, and mariners ;  
So shall she turn from Greece her face, and I  
Sleep without dream. Thus spake I to Parmenio.

HEPHESTION.

He answered ?

ALEXANDER.

Still the old note—"Darius arms :  
A year, and all his empire will be on you."

HEPHESTION.

He boasts a million soldiers.

ALEXANDER.

Let them come !

A moiety of their numbers fought at Issus.  
The strength of all his empire let him raise :  
Be it embattled, we will bring it under.  
The enmity I fear is that which lurks  
A dull swamp-fever in that people's veins  
Which hates its lord because it scorns itself,  
And, having striven but half, knows not its limit.  
This is the hate which bides its time. A realm  
In argument of war may stand confuted  
Then when its say is said : well silenced, Time  
Takes still the conqueror's side.

HEPHESTION.

Is there forgiveness

For conquerors ?

ALEXANDER.

Aye ; but for half conquerors, none.

The realms which earlier conquerors won, they stole,

Using for personal ends. What rule all glorious

That primal usurpation counterpoised ?

What victories swathed the grub in light ? What hand

Beneficent in sternness, or, if soft,

Parental, not seductive, raised on high,

With virtue strengthened, or with knowledge lit

Those kingdoms subjugate ? I wrest them back

In the name of honesty and upright dealing,

And give them to mankind. If sword of mine

Had slept in the iron ore for endless ages,

Spurning its call divine, the mocking gods

Bending from heaven had swept with menial besom,

As from fair pavements, dust, those menial kings,

The opprobrium of authentic royalty.

The realms I rule shall love me.

HEPHESTION.

Lesser Asia

'Tis true this day is with you.



## ALEXANDER.

Persia shall be :  
But till she does her best, and worst, and fails,  
The work I work is temporal. Let her do it !  
Then comes my time :—  
Strong hand makes empire : hand that heals retains it.  
I came not to be Cyrus o'er again ;  
Another reign begins. Enough : 'tis late :—  
How fares that fallen House ?

## HEPHESTION.

As Patience fares  
In the extreme of sadness. Sisygambis,  
Under the great weight of her ninety years,  
Sits heavy, slowly moving tearless eyes  
Which seek her son Darius, or, it may be,  
Her eighty brothers, slaughtered in one day  
Long since by Ochus. She that was the queen,  
On the queen-mother gazes without speech,  
And, pitying that high grief, tempers her own.  
The royal children stand, now glad, now pensive,  
"Twixt light and shade.

## ALEXANDER.

I chose for them the best,  
Consigning them to you.

HEPHESTION.

The palace pile  
Of olden Tyre affords them kind repose.  
The sea-dirge scarce can pierce its massive walls :  
There they have woodland shades for grief to hide in,  
And streams to lull the voice of memory.  
Those Easterns call such places Paradises,  
And much affect them.

ALEXANDER.

Seek that aged queen,  
Hephestion. When my leisure serves I'll see her.

---

SCENE II.—*The Senate House in New Tyre.*

HANNO, HAMILCAR, ASDRUBAL, ITHOCLES, and other  
*Tyrrians.*

---

HANNO.

He says we're merchants, and in merchant wise  
We trafficked with him, and equivocated,  
First sending him in pomp a golden crown,  
Next, when he fain had offered vows to Melkart,  
Denying access.

ASDRUBAL.

Let him pray outside :  
He makes no landing here.

ITHOCLES.

We're strong enough,  
And victuall'd for two years. 'Twixt Greece and Persia  
The issue doubtful hangs : if Greece should fail,  
Persia to us shall be beholden much,  
That kept her foe far from her. If she wins—

HAMILCAR.

Ten citizens have dream'd Apollo's statue,  
Ta'en 'mid the chiefest spoils when Gela fell,  
And now by gift of Carthage ours, stood up  
Beside their beds with clouded brow and stern,  
And said, "I leave this city."

ASDRUBAL.

Close those gates !  
Whene'er they're opened such a din comes o'er us  
From keels half laid, and blasts from new-forged engines,  
I hear not him that speaks.

ITHOCLES.

The gates, ye slaves !

A HERALD (*entering*).

Lords of the Senate, hail! Great Carthage honours  
The queenly womb from which her greatness sprang,  
Accepts your terms, the Cypriot port, and trade  
In gums Arabian shared on equal terms,  
And stands your mate in arms.

[*Shouts of applause.*]

A SENATOR.

Who speaks of yielding?

SECOND SENATOR.

The gods are with us.

THIRD SENATOR.

Thus my sentence stands—

Bind we with golden chains Apollo's statue  
To the altar of great Melkart! Tyre's new guest  
Shall love his city soon. Thus wrought the Ephesians,  
And with them bode their god thenceforth in peace.

---

SCENE III.—*Sea-shore near Old Tyre.*

ALEXANDER, PTOLEMY, HEPHESTION.

---

ALEXANDER.

There's truth on earth still extant. Read that missive.

[PTOLEMY *reads aloud.*]

"The Hebrew people, subject long to Persia,

Revolt not. Neither war they with the Greek  
That wrong'd them not. Their God shall guard His own."

ALEXANDER.

These men speak plainly ; Tyre prevaricated :  
At neither side stand these ; but Tyre at both :  
I somewhat love thee, Hierosolyma !  
A time I'll find, while lingers this long siege,  
To look upon that city. Lo, Philotas !

[PHILOTAS *approaches.*]

He has been a-prospering, and his heart is high.

PTOLEMY.

'Tis higher than his head ; and that he tosses  
As though he supp'd with gods. His thoughts, what are  
they?  
Brain-bubbles from infructuous restlessness :  
Alone the slowly-gender'd thought lives long :  
The rest I deem of as the buzzing swarm  
Teem'd from the mud of Nile.

PHILOTAS.

Hail, Alexander !

Fallen is Damascus !

ALEXANDER.

It was never strong.

PHILOTAS.

Oh, 'tis a mighty city, and a rich!  
It stands in meads well-water'd, girt with gardens  
That charge the winds with fragrance. Then the captives!  
Their ransom shall enrich you with a flood  
Beggaring the all-gold Pactolus ;—princely ladies  
From Issus fled ; three daughters of King Ochus ;  
Dead Memnon's widow, and his daughters three.  
We've clutch'd, 'mid other spoils, Darius' wardrobe!  
If all Old Tyre to theatre were turn'd,  
And all our soldiers changed to mimes, the least  
Might choose his part, and play it with fit garb!  
I'd end this tedious siege with one great drama,  
"The tragic comedy of Persia's fall,"  
(Myself the extempore Aristophanes)  
And homeward speed next morn!

ALEXANDER.

The royal treasure?

PHILOTAS.

A world it is of ingots and of gems.

ALEXANDER.

That means a fleet. The price of Sidon's paid.

PHILOTAS.

The treasure's well ; but oh, the way we won it!

Upon an intercepted messenger  
We found a scroll from him that ruled Damascus,  
Proffering submission, friendship, and the gold.  
We sent him back—a smile our only answer—  
And follow'd to the city. From its gates  
Slow moved a long procession, streaming forth,  
Old courtiers, nobles, magistrates, and priests,  
Seven thousand beasts of burthen in their midst  
Beneath the treasure bent. "He'll claim reward,"  
Thus thought we. Swift as lightning, while they near'd us,  
As though for hostile their approach misdeeming,  
On them we hurl'd a squadron of our horse,  
With orders not to spare. The sight was merry :  
The wonder in their stupid eyes upturn'd  
Surpass'd, methought, the terror !

ALEXANDER.

A deed accursed,  
Hateful to all the gods, to me, your king,  
Opprobrious, and the total state of Greece,  
Your father wrought, and you, than him more vile,  
So much his weakness on your folly leans.  
Necessities of war sanction at times  
Complicity with traitors : double treason  
Traitors themselves abhor. Corrupt them first,  
Then cheat and slay them ! Name of Macedon !

With what a clownish shoon have knaves in dance,  
Yea, thine own children trampled thee to mud,  
Pale Persia's scorn ! The Dacian had not done it !  
I'll learn of this at large from men not false,  
And with just vengeance wash my household clean.  
Back to Damascus ! Send your father hither !  
Andromachus shall rule there in his stead.  
I'll trust no more Parmenio with that honour  
Which he dishonours.

[*PHILOTAS makes obeisance and retires.*]

After him, Ptolemy !

He'll bruit abroad this massacre. Lo, Hephestion,  
How thin a varnish coats the ingrain'd baseness  
Of these new-mounted upstarts ! Kings and trinkets  
Have eaten out his honest heart. In Thrace  
Man-like he fought : the man has swell'd to boyhood,  
Vainglorious, petulant, restless, garrulous, loud,  
The prey of his necessities. Beware him !  
A man of faculties without a head ;  
Passions, but yet no heart. His cruelty  
Its provocation finds in mirth, not anger.

HEPHESTION.

I've noted that long since. The man's still young :  
Coldness in youth is twice the cold of eld :  
Beneath the ashes of a fire burnt out



Some heat may lurk ; but from the unfuell'd hearth  
And dusk bars of a never-lighted fire  
The chillness comes of death. Not Macedon,  
'Twas warm Greece taught me that.

ALEXANDER.

Beware the man !

Twice, while I rated him, he glanced at you  
With sidelong eye. He'll hurt you when he may.

---

SCENE IV.—*The Causeway between Old and New Tyre.*

PHYLAX, ANTISTHENES.

---

ANTISTHENES.

Methinks our king grows proud.

PHYLAX.

'Tis diet high  
Pack-horse to charger turns. The o'er-fed gods  
Are emulous this youth with victories feeding.

ANTISTHENES.

Let him take Tyre, and then he may be proud ;  
But if he fails, these fingers shall record it,  
"At Tyre it was the Greeks first call'd him proud."  
Our patron loves him not, nor loves Hephestion.

PHYLAX.

Our patron's hasty. Time befriends the slow.

---

SCENE V.—*The Gardens of the Palace at Old Tyre.*

HEPHESTION, ARSINOE.

---

ARSINOE.

Hephestion, well return'd ! My mother dwells  
To-day recluse. She bade me show you flowers.  
Here is a rose unblown. My mother thinks  
God made the world for peace, not war, Hephestion,  
Or he had never planted roses in it ;  
But what think you ?

HEPHESTION.

Princess, the rose hath thorns :  
'Tis sweetness mixed with sharpness : such is war.  
I see your cousin walks beneath the palms.

ARSINOE.

Is she not fair ?

HEPHESTION.

None fairer. Three days since  
Passing, she fix'd on us her great blue eyes,  
That seem'd to shine through tears.

ARSINOË.

They're tearful ever :

She is an orphan, nursed within our house.  
She told you once that we were like two sisters ;  
But more she loves me far than sisters love.  
Amastris reads—her wont—a book all gold :  
'Tis full of songs : I fear they're chiefly war-songs.  
Were there in all times wars ?

HEPHESTION.

Princess, there were :

Our Homer sang of battles.

ARSINOË.

Think you not

He sang of battles in his songs' behoof,  
Lest, singing only little lays of love,  
Strong hearts had scorn'd his music? This I know,  
War is not hatred only ; for our king,  
Hearing of some great deed your king had wrought,  
Some deed both just and brave, lifted his hands  
And pray'd—" Preserve, Eternal Power, this crown !  
Yet, if from us thou rend it, let it light  
On brows of Alexander."

HEPHESTION.

'Twas a prayer

Fit for a king.

ARSINOE.

He greets our Sisygambis  
With that great name of "Mother:" he is reverent:  
And yet, methinks, he neither loves nor hates.

HEPHESTION.

He loves not many, and himself the least:  
His purposes to him are wife and child.  
He couch'd on frosty rocks while huddled crowds  
Our camp-fires hid; and when the summer heat  
More late had dried the marrow in our bones,  
And now, a spring discover'd, t'wards us crawl'd  
A soldier with a water-cup, one moment  
He gazed into the eyes of those around,  
Then pour'd that water on the sands. Alone  
He would not drink it.

ARSINOE.

Ask me not, Hephestion,  
To love your king, or wish him what you wish him:  
That were, in me, disloyal, faithless, false;  
Defeat I needs must wish him. Oh for the time  
When all the good shall war on all things evil,  
And on each other none! That time shall come!  
The Light shall vanquish Dark. Who made mankind  
Will tell us, one day, all we need to know.

HEPHESTION.

Then why so late ?

ARSINOE.

No doubt that man may learn  
His need of light, and prize it well when granted ;  
For thus by question apt, and feign'd delay,  
Parent in child quickens the appetite  
For knowledge first, and afterwards rewards it ;  
And what are years—or ages—to a god ?  
Then wars shall cease.

HEPHESTION.

War is an instinct, princess ;  
The gods have given it, and the god-like praised :  
It lifts us o'er the petty love of life,  
The quest for pleasure, and the greed for gold ;  
It makes a nation's manhood ; stifles factions ;  
Crowns the great head watching the whole night long  
For them that sleep. War, like a healthful tempest,  
Scatters the infection.

ARSINOE.

Ah, the Greek is hard !  
I guess'd it once ; I know it now. Last year  
I saw a palace fill'd with Grecian statues :  
How beautiful they were ; but yet how loveless !

Sweetness was theirs, and majesty, and grace ;  
Yet theirs, methought, a world that knew no pity :  
A thing hard-hearted seem'd your Grecian Art.  
Our art was rule : Persia held high her head ;—  
The Power Divine beheld, and brought it low :  
What if the heart of Greece should turn to stone ?  
Shall she escape ?

HEPHESTION.

I've had my boding thoughts :—  
She's great in war.

ARSINOE.

Praise not that murderer, War !  
Persia had Empery ; Greece hath Art and Science :  
Why not content them, each, with what she hath ?  
Or as a youth in marriage takes a maid,  
And of these twain a lovely race is born,  
Why should not warring nations wed their gifts  
And breed some god-like gain ? What hope from war ?  
What fruit but breaking hearts ?

HEPHESTION.

That shade comes o'er you  
Which veil'd you when we met ;—when, Issus ended,  
Swift to a wailing tent the king and I  
Made way to tell you that your father lived.

ARSINOE.

How gentle seem'd you then ! He, too, was gentle :  
We knelt to you, not him ; the king we deem'd you :  
Your king but laugh'd. He, too, was royal-faced,  
Albeit too eager-eyed.

HEPHESTION.

The other Greeks,—  
Of them what say you ?

ARSINOE.

They are light and boastful,  
Save Ptolemy, upon whose grave, broad brow  
Empire might sit : they spurn the earth, not tread it :  
Here is the one I like the least. Abide  
Till he is gone, Hephestion.

PHILOTAS (*approaching*).

Beam and breeze,  
Maiden, to you, and these, the inferior flowers,  
Are boon alike. Suspecting in that rose  
Your beauty's future rival wise you were  
To pluck it still unblown. As kind you'll prove  
Bestowing it on me.

ARSINOE.

The Royal House  
Accords its gifts to those who claim them least :  
I pluck'd it for Hephestion.

PHILOTAS.

He is happy :  
The favourites of a prince are favourites still  
With those around him—nobles, courtiers, captives—  
Warriors alone, attent on graver cares,  
Catch not the lesser whispers of a court :  
Rustlings of silk for others, not for them, \*  
Their oracles reveal.

ARSINOE.

Hephestion——

PHILOTAS.

Lady,  
Your mother, doubtless, would have news of friends  
Housed in Damascus : I am lately thence.

ARSINOE.

Her majesty within the palace sits :  
It may be she will see you.



PHILOTAS.

Lady, farewell !

*[Aside, departing.]*

One day Hephestion shall remember this.

ARSINOE.

He's gone :—the day grows still. Hold you, Hephestion,  
A favourite 'mid the flowers.

HEPHESTION.

Princess, in this  
The oft-erring public vote I deem not erring.  
You've heard the legend of the Flowers' Debate.  
The Rose her claim advanced : "Love's flower am I !  
The nightingale loves more my fragrant breast  
Than his own feather'd mate." The Lily next,  
"The flower of Purity am I : young maids  
Boast me their snowy standard." At the word,  
The Rose put forth her first white bud, and wears  
Since then the double crown.

ARSINOE.

I like that legend :

Who made it ?

HEPHESTION.

I—unless you made it, princess :  
My eyes were on you when the thought descended.

ARSINOE.

Hephestion, I have not forgot my promise ;  
This rose-bud take : 'tis white. Could rose-buds live  
As long as grateful thoughts, or were they loved  
Their freshness past, 'twould help you to remember  
In hours to come, what else you might forget,  
Kindness in prison'd days to burthen'd hearts,  
Kindness to helpless womanhood, sad old age,  
Childhood—or what was childhood till our woes  
Had changed young hearts to serious. I must go :  
By this time our sweet mother will expect me.  
For his sake whom you love, your king, your friend,  
Jest not with dangers in the wars before you.

HEPHESTION.

Princess, for me this flower will keep its freshness.

---

SCENE VI.—*Gate of the Temple of Jerusalem.*

PTOLEMY, and a squadron of Thessalian Horse.

---

PTOLEMY.

Here wait him, friends. Yon fig-tree be my shade !

[*Alone.*]

He's right, and yet he's wrong, this kingly builder.  
That kingdom which he spake of—one o'er earth—  
Would prove a god-like work indeed if built  
Upon the god-like only in man's breast,  
If on its ill, then ill were lord of all.  
But who shall sever 'twixt our good and ill ?  
Not power, it works with each by turn ; not law,  
Law with the actions deals, but not the heart ;  
Not science, science rules but worlds of thought ;  
Not art, 'tis a child's warble ; not religion,  
Men fear the gods ; not less they serve their lusts :  
The things without us are but casual to us :  
The things within us share our human taint.  
On something deeper in us than self-love,  
Who'd lift mankind must build. There's nothing deeper :—  
Then like an isle from sunless waters raised  
And fix'd where nothing was, that Power who made us,  
Who knows alone our spirit's depths, and sees  
Alone the eddies of the restless waters,  
Must call some under-realm, all adamant,  
There build—if he will build. Small hope of that !  
A miracle it were, passing the dream  
Of prophet, priest, or bard. 'Tis still the old round :  
Realm wars on realm, lest wrongs should meet no scourge.  
This youth must plan : and pass.

---

SCENE VII.—*Interior of the Temple.*

*The JEWISH HIGH PRIEST, ALEXANDER.*

---

HIGH PRIEST.

This is that scroll whereof I spake to thee :  
This is that vision which the prophet saw,  
Exile in Susa, by Choaspes' flood :  
" In vision I beheld a Beast two-horn'd ;  
Westward he push'd, and northward, and to south,  
Nor any stood before him. After that,  
Rush'd from the west, o'er face of all the earth  
Which yet he touch'd not, flying upon wings,  
Another, swifter portent, mightier far :  
He smote against that Beast, and trod him down ;  
Nor any might deliver. Then, a Voice  
There reach'd me from betwixt the river banks :  
' That Beast which thou beheldest is that king,  
Lord of the Median and the Persian realms :  
He that shall overcome him is the Greek.'"  
This is that vision which our prophet saw.

ALEXANDER (*after musing*).

You will not wed my cause, and save your city ?

HIGH PRIEST.

We may not, and we will not.

+

ALEXANDER.

Yet you know

Mine is the empire ?

HIGH PRIEST.

What is writ is writ.

ALEXANDER.

What was that sacrifice you offer'd late ?

The like I have not seen.

HIGH PRIEST.

The shadow 'twas

Of substance onward striding. Ask no more :

We are a prophet-people : ours the Hope :

We are God's people, and we stand apart :

The kings of the earth may speed us, or may rend ;

Know us they cannot.

ALEXANDER.

I too have a secret—

Credence I yield you, Priest. My first resolve

I have repented, and I cancel it :

I tribute none demand, and in your city

Challenge no rule.

Of me your prophets spake in ancient days ;

Spake they in earlier days of Persian Cyrus ?

HIGH PRIEST.

By name, before his birth two hundred years :  
Hear thou the word : "Cyrus my shepherd is :  
His right hand I have holden, hearts of kings  
Loosening before him. I the brazen gates  
Will cleave, and bars of iron cut in twain."

ALEXANDER.

The Babylonian gates stood wide that night  
When shrank Euphrates' wave.

HIGH PRIEST (*reading*).

"Be dry, ye rivers !

In Babylon the desert beast shall hide ;  
The dragon in her palaces shall couch ;  
'The bittern shriek above her shallow pools."  
Young man, hold thou no hand to Babylon,  
For God hath judged her, lest thou share her plagues.

ALEXANDER.

The day goes by ; lead onward to the gates.  
O'er all the earth my empire shall be just,  
Godlike my rule.

HIGH PRIEST.

Young man, beware ! God's prophet  
Awards thee Persia's crown, but not the world's :

He who wears that should be the Prince of Peace.  
Thy portion lies in bounds. Limit and Term  
Govern the world. Two ways before thee lie.

ALEXANDER.

I'll meditate those twain, and, all things ponder'd,  
Election make.

HIGH PRIEST.

Your pardon, royal sir,  
A little moment past your choice was made :  
'Tis known above ; and you one day will know it.  
You trust not God : the man you trust will fail you.

ALEXANDER.

What man ?

HIGH PRIEST.

Yourself.

ALEXANDER.

At least I trust none other :  
Thou whom the truth makes fearless, fare thee well !

[*Rejoining PTOLEMY at the gates.*]

Still sits the unwonted wonder on your brow,  
My Ptolemy !

PTOLEMY.

Sir, all men kneel to you,  
You but to one, and him a man unknown !  
When first that long and strange procession reach'd us  
I saw an earnest inquest in your eye,  
A pallor on your cheek.

ALEXANDER.

You err, my friend :  
I knelt, but not to one unseen till then.  
Three years gone by, three months, and thirteen days,  
At noon I sat in Macedonian Dium,  
Musing the fortunes of this Asian war :—  
A fear fell on me ; with that fear a trance :  
It was not sleep.

PTOLEMY.

What saw you in that trance ?

ALEXANDER.

Thing as they were.

PTOLEMY.

No more ?

ALEXANDER.

Yea, things beside :  
My captains grew ape-visaged, and chattering rush'd



On errants all confused, while down the street,  
In the wide Agora, on the temple's steps,  
The concourse, shrunk to pigmies, scream'd and strove;—  
The tallest like a three years' child. Meanwhile,  
There where benignant plains but late had spread,  
Heaven-high there hung in the east a mount, fire-crown'd,  
And ruin-flank'd.

PTOLEMY.

'Twas strange!

ALEXANDER.

It was not slumber:

Parmenio and Philotas at my right,  
You, Ptolemy, at my left, this witness bare,  
That from my session, till, the rite complete,  
Forth from the fane of Zeus the priesthood stream'd,  
I had not ceased from audience and command  
Though sterner than my wont. The trance was long,  
And, as it deepen'd, darkness round me closed.  
Then from that darkness like a god this man  
Towards me moved, that mitre on his brow,  
That gem-illumined breast-plate on his breast.  
He spake,—“Fear nought; the God I serve shall lay  
His hand upon thy head, and lead thee on  
Triumphant through the danger and the gloom.”

This world is full of wonders, Ptolemy,  
Or else no world it were for man, since man  
Is marvellous most. To none divulge this thing,  
Nor write it in thine annals of the war.

---

SCENE VIII.—*The Causeway between Old Tyre and  
New Tyre.*

HEPHESTION, CRATERUS, PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS

---

CRATERUS.

We've waited for the king, and for a wind :  
The wind is ours at last.

SELEUCUS.

And in fit time  
The king, that's wafted still by fortunate winds.

ALEXANDER (*arriving*).

The wind is fair, and all the gods are with us!  
Bear up, my Cypriot and Sidonian fleets ;  
I've bought you with a price ! cut well the seas,  
And as the sword into the scabbard glides,  
So rush into their harbours ! The boarding ships,  
You're sure they lie beside our mole, Seleucus,  
And moor'd by chains, not ropes ? Those Tyrian divers  
Will cut them else adrift.

SELEUCUS.

They tried it thrice,  
You baffled them. We're ready, sire.

HEPHESTION.

Lo, there!

Around yon city's walls they drag their prisoners ;—  
Each after each they bend them to the block ;—  
They hurl their headless trunks into the flood!

SELEUCUS.

Hark to that shout!

ALEXANDER.

Our fleets have forced the harbours!

Up with the engines and the storming-parties !  
I cross the right-hand galley with Admetus ;  
You, Cœnus, with Lysander, cross the left.  
Forth with the landing-planks and scaling-ladders ! .  
On, on, and up !

[ALEXANDER *is the first to mount the breach.*]

HAMILCAR (*from the top of the tower*).

Men of Phœnicia, still the heights are ours.  
Hurl on them sleet of fire!

HANNO.

'Tis life or death !

ALEXANDER (*striking him down*).

Then take thy death !

HEPHESTION.

And take, Hamilcar, thine !

[*His sword breaks ; he closes with HAMILCAR, and  
flings him from the right-hand tower into the sea.  
At the same moment CÆNUS gains the left-hand  
tower.*

ALEXANDER.

'Tis won ! They fly !

---

SCENE IX.—*The Palace of New Tyre.*

*The TYRIAN KING, AZELMICUS, ASDRUBAL, ITHOCLES,  
Generals and Senators. The Ambassadors from Carthage.*

---

THE KING.

I'm old for fight, but young enough to die :

I'll wait them on my throne.

ASDRUBAL.

Within the vaults

'Neath Melkart's fane, amid our heaps of treasure,  
Conceal him with those envoys from the west :

To Carthage bid them bear the Tyrian crown,  
For Tyre has done with it. A ceremony

*[Senators bear away the king  
and ambassadors.]*

Remains or ere we die.

ITHOCLES.

The torch? 'Tis here.

The palace of great Tyre shall house them never.

*[The Tyrians are driven in from all sides on the  
Palace, which bursts into flame. At this moment  
ALEXANDER arrives.]*

ASDRUBAL.

Tyrians, we fight for vengeance, not for life—  
Tyre ne'er forewent that solace.

ITHOCLES.

Vengeance! Vengeance!

*[The battle rages till the whole Tyrian  
garrison has been cut down.]*

ALEXANDER.

So perish sea-born Tyre that ruled the waters!  
She sinks, like yonder sun, in a sea all blood.  
At dawn with feast and military honours,

We'll thank the just and promise-keeping gods  
Who've led us thus far forth on victory's way.  
Seleucus, in the sanctuary of Melkart  
See that the priesthood dedicate that engine  
Which shatter'd first yon wall. Ye sons of Greece !  
Your country thanks you : many a song of hers  
This day inaugurates ! A spoil is yours  
Well earn'd. Three days we rest : the fourth for Egypt !

---

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Road to Rhagæ near the Caspian Gates.*

PARMENIO and PHILOTAS.

---

PHILOTAS.

You are a greater man, sir, than you know,  
And bear your honours meekly. Pray you pardon  
My sometimes halting reverence.

PARMENIO.

Here's a change !  
Oftimes to bate your perilous pride I've warned you,  
" My son, be less." Yet now—your latest whim—  
All humbleness you show.

PHILOTAS.

Humble I should be  
To one who for his master has a god :  
Unseen I heard the king his schemes expounding,  
Hephestion mildly plausible.

PARMENIO.

Schemes ! What schemes ?

PHILOTAS.

Kneel, Hercules, and Dionysus tremble !  
Tremble, thou Caucasus that hid'st thy head  
In snows eterne ! Our great stage-king has sworn  
To plant his buskin on thy wintry scalp !

PARMENIO.

What seeks the boy ?

PHILOTAS.

From eastern Caucasus  
Two rivers rush, the Indus and the Oxus,  
One south, one north. He'd tie them, tail to tail,  
Like foxes caught, to test their strength and prowess ;  
Next, on those heights he seeks some herb to enrich  
The Stagyrte's medicine shop : and, lastly, thence  
He'd o'er-gaze Scythia, which with proximate place  
Is honour'd in the order of his conquests.

PARMENIO.

Renounce great Persia for a realm of bears !  
I march with him no more !

PHILOTAS.

You shall not need :  
Besieging Tyre, he sent you to Damascus



To seal up sacred balms, and perfume-phials,  
And inventory the wardrobe of Darius.  
In Egypt, place conspicuous you had none :  
Now, for like cause, the Caspian Gates you pass not,  
Ecbatana your charge. Upon his treasure  
He bids you sit like an old hen, and hatch it  
While he strides on to victory. Snows of age !  
With what auspicious calm ye crown old heads,  
And hearts virile no more !

PARMENIO.

The king's a madman :—  
The worse for us ! Free him from that conceit  
That he's a god, the man of men were he :  
None like him we have had since Marathon.

PHILOTAS.

One half his victories of his blindness comes,  
And noting not the hindrance.

PARMENIO.

At Granicus—  
But that was chance. At Issus he was greater :  
On Egypt and on Tyre I set small store :  
Next came Arbela. Half a million foes  
Melted like snow. To him Epaminondas  
Was as the wingless creature to the wing'd.

PHILOTAS.

I grant his greatness were his godship sane !  
But note his brow ; 'tis Thought's least earthly temple :  
Then mark, beneath, that round, not human eye,  
Still glowing like a panther's ! In his body  
No passion dwells ; but all his mind is passion,  
Wild intellectual appetite and instinct  
That works without a law.

PARMENIO.

But half you know him.

There is a zigzag lightning in his brain  
That flies in random flashes, yet not errs :  
Chances his victories seem ; but link those chances,  
And under them a science you shall find,  
Though unauthentic, contraband, illicit,  
Yea, contumelious oft to laws of war.  
Fortune, that as a mistress smiles on others,  
Serves him as duty-bound : her blood is he,  
Born in the purple of her royalties.  
On me long time she frown'd : these mailèd fists  
Smote her on breast and brow for thirty years,  
From Athos westward to the Illyrian coasts,  
Ere yet she learn'd to love me. He too loves me !  
Though jealous of my fame.

PHILOTAS.

You dream, good father !

A tent's small fissure and a moonless night

Help'd me to better knowledge. Thus he spake :

" Hephestion, till Arbela's fight I loved him :

I know him now, poor shell of that he was,

For baggage-tendence best."

PARMENIO.

Blunderer and traitor !

He placed me at Arbela, naked of friends,

Amid unnumber'd foes. He lied, and lies !

PHILOTAS.

How far to India, father ?

PARMENIO.

'Tis earth's bound :

Beyond is nothing save the rising sun.

PHILOTAS.

'Tis the beginning of his last ambition.

Phœbus Apollo, stand on guard ! this youth

Will take a leap into thy flaming chair ;

He'll clutch thee by the bright locks never shorn ;

Far forth o'er earth he'll cast thee, there to tend

Once more Admetus' herds ! I tell you, father,  
Three times that night I heard him boast his schemes ;  
Heard, and not laugh'd. 'Twas Scythia, first ; then India.

PARMENIO.

His injuries to myself I reck not of ;—  
But shall a new Cambyses drown in sands  
The best and bravest army bred by Greece ?  
Not so, Parmenio living !

PHILOTAS.

Other help  
Greece lacks this hour. The camp is full of murmurs ;  
Vacant of aid.

PARMENIO.

Your counsel ?

PHILOTAS.

Hear it, sir !  
Better a man should perish than a people.

PARMENIO.

The day grows chill.

PHILOTAS.

A hundred ways there are—

PARMENIO.

Hark ! 'Tis the royal trumpet. Son, be patient :  
The gods are helpful.

PHILOTAS.

Pious hand is his  
That helps the helpful gods !

PARMENIO.

We've time before us :  
Likeliest, a thousand hidden dangers 'scaped,  
He'll dash his bark against some mountainous rock,  
And vanish in flat seas. And yet, it may be,  
The years this youth will soþer.

PHILOTAS.

It were needful :  
If, ere that time, he perish in his cups,  
One man there is on whom the whole Greek host  
Would fix its gaze.

PARMENIO.

His name ?

PHILOTAS.

'Twas once Parmenio :—  
The man from war to war the battle's king ;

The man who grudged no soldier drink or victual,  
Nor sold his life for nought ; the man who now  
An empire's treasure holds in charge. Enough !  
If back you're sent, you'll know I fabled not.

---

SCENE II.—*At Rhagæ.*

SELEUCUS, CRATERUS, *and* PTOLEMY.

---

SELEUCUS.

Too late ! The hunted stag has ta'en the leap ;  
His lair is cold.

CRATERUS.

The king will storm at this :  
He's quicklier moved than once : I mark him changing :  
He wills not opposition to his will.  
Since first he breathed this Asian air of kingship  
Divinity of kings hath touch'd him much :  
First, in his blood it play'd, like other lusts :  
It mounted next to fancy's seat ; and now,  
His eye usurping, purples all his world.  
Injury to kings he deems not injury only,  
But sacrilege.

SELEUCUS.

I scorn your words, Craterus,  
I say I scorn them ! Ptolemy, our wisest,  
In sophist balance never weighs his king,  
Nor scans him from the critic's fancied height.

CRATERUS.

A speculative man that knows not men,  
A man whose blood flows sweetly through his veins,  
Leaving at every point a sleepy pleasure  
That needs must overflow to all our race  
In vague, complacent kindness. All his thoughts  
In orbits as of planets curving go,  
Grasping blank space alone. Your minds majestic,  
Like Ptolemy's, are oft but stately triflers.

SELEUCUS.

Has the king faults? So be it ! He can afford them.

---

SCENE III.—*Rhagæ.*

ALEXANDER *attended by* PARMENIO, HEPHESTION,  
*and other Generals, and surrounded by soldiers.*

---

ALEXANDER.

Darius is forth fled. I have chased a shadow :

New hosts he'll raise ; and I from realm to realm,  
From year to year must hunt him. Lords, three days  
Here make we rest perforce. Thus much, Parmenio,  
You cost me at Arbela !

PARMENIO.

Gods of Greece !

Hear ye this man ? My hand it was, my hand,  
Raised from the dust your late-crown'd Macedon :  
And lo ! this day, the heir of all this greatness  
Upbraids me as a boy !

ALEXANDER.

I said, and say it :

Arbela all but won, to prop your squadrons  
You call'd me back : Darius made escape :  
I saw his chariot sink beneath the hills  
Lit by the last gleam of a sun that set ;  
Let him that dares deny it.

PARMENIO.

I deny it !

My best and bravest from my squadrons drain'd,  
Me with a trivial force your blindness placed  
'Mid countless foes. With skill consummate less  
Than mine that hour your whole left wing had perish'd.  
In wrath, not fear, I warn'd you of your error :



Aghast you saw it, and you made retreat ;  
Ere you had reach'd us the Thessalian horse  
With fortunate charge piercing the Persian ranks  
Had given us air to breathe. You spurn'd my counsel,  
Or earlier than Arbela's fight began  
Had come its glorious ending.

## ALEXANDER.

Aye ! your counsel !  
You will'd me to attack the foe by night :  
I answer'd that I steal not victory :  
The craven craft trips in the cloak that hides it  
And falls to the earth. With army small, like mine,  
Defeat the worst were victory incomplete :—  
This Persian foe is as a mist that melts,  
Re-forms, and swells against me. Oh, your counsels !  
I scorn'd them from the first, or foot of mine  
Had trod not Persian soil.

## PARMENIO.

Shade of dead Philip !  
Make answer in my name !

## ALEXANDER.

You counsell'd me  
Beside Granicus, not to cross the stream :

At Ephesus—by auguries back'd, and omens  
That deepliest dint the craziest brain—you counsell'd  
To fight by sea, not land, the Persian fleet  
My ships exceeding fourfold, and with theirs  
Phœnicia's mated. Issus won, you counsell'd  
Naked to leave the Asian coasts, their prey  
Their appanage, who, from ports secure forth sailing,  
From north to south had raised revolted Greece,  
And barr'd me from return.

PARMENIO.

This too I counsell'd—

Omit not from that inventory of sins  
So diligently register'd, my greatest—  
To dash the red torch from a wanton's hand ;  
Flameless to leave royal Persepolis,  
And shame the drunken revel !

**ALEXANDER.**

Hoary dotard !

Darest thou remind me of that sole offence  
Which spots my sun-like fame? All-reverend mocker,  
At whose false breath dead bones of seeming truth  
In blasphemy are flesh'd, of shames thou speakest !  
One shame there rests—not merited—not mine—

On me and Greece ! I spared to file my tongue  
With thy transgression till this hour. Damascus  
Madden'd, beholding from her centuried throne  
The unutterable, obscene, impious act,  
When they whom thou hadst bribed to sell their trust,  
A long procession, from her gates advanced,  
Their treasure in the midst, unarm'd, unfearing,  
Old nobles, women, grey, defenceless priests,  
And thou, the fool-led pupil of that son  
Whose boyish babble tunes thy senile drivel,  
Perfidiously didst on them launch thy power,  
And in their own blood drown.

PARMENIO.

It is a lie !

The impeachment is a lie ; the man a liar !  
That deed I wrought not, and I knew not of it :  
In the rear I rode. Captains of Macedon,  
Your ears have heard. I brand him for a liar !  
Your king has lied, and lies !

ALEXANDER.

Caitiff and coward !

The grey hair—well thou know'st it—saves that head  
Which else this sword had from thy shoulders swept.

I am requited justly who, unjustly  
In glorious offices above thy peers  
Stayed thee so long, for those high tasks unmeet  
Which by Craterus, Ptolemy, Hephestion,  
In silence were vicariously discharged.  
I strip thee of all functions to the last :—  
Take from him chain and sword !

*[After a pause.*

I stand rebuked ;

And, gazing on your countenances, lords,  
Remember that the ruins of a man  
Have in them ruin's claims.  
The man who smote his king upon the face,  
Who on his forehead nail'd the name of lie,  
Shall live, but not beside him, and not near,  
Honours shall keep, but sway no battle field.  
Back to Ecbatana ! Get thee hence, Parmenio !  
And guard its citadel with Harpalus,  
A pardon'd man like thee. My purpose stood  
Thou thence shouldst join us with our Thracian aids :  
It shall not be ; for I distrust thy sword,  
Though one time sharp, distrust, detest thy counsel,  
Yet trust thy faithfulness to guard my gold  
And keep my Median capital in awe.  
Depart : work waits. Thy son shall take no hurt  
From his sire's fall. On earth we meet no more.

## PARMENIO.

King—for that pride which maddens, and will wreck you,  
Demands such lessening titles—I depart.  
I too, like you, have mused, and changed my purpose :  
That which it was, and is, let no man ask.  
This is the ending of a life-long league.  
I laid my strong sword by your cradle's side ;  
I taught you how to walk, and how to run,  
To ride, to swim ; and when you sought to fly  
I bade you to beware.  
Could all this thing be painted, patch'd, adjusted,  
Reduced to spleen of fancy, proven a dream,  
This day from out the starry count of time  
Be blotted, cancell'd, buried, and trod out,  
I'd not so have it, for my heart is changed.  
My head, you say, through age hath lost its cunning ;  
My heart hath insight still : I see your end :  
I'll whisper it to Philip in the shades,  
For I shall see him soon.  
You shall succeed, and your success be ruin :  
A name you shall achieve : in after years  
The byword it shall live of madness crown'd :  
By night the dagger, and the spear by day  
From you shall glance : snow-wastes and burning sands  
To you obsequious, shall but choke the just :  
Yet all your greatness shall be changed to bane.

Your virtues shall not walk in Virtue's ways,  
But glorify your vices, and the beam  
Of your bright mind blacken that mind to madness.  
The empire you shall build in cloudy wreck  
Shall melt around your deathbed premature,  
Which shall not be a warrior's. That first realm,  
Your father's work and mine, to dust shall fall ;  
The Royal House vanish as a wind,  
Your mother, and your sisters, sons, and wife,  
Down struck successive by a vassal hand  
In bloody, base, and ignominious death.  
Lords, give ye way. Some blood-drops in my brain  
At times make dim mine eyes ; but help I need not.  
Who's this ? Hephestion ? Tell my son, Philotas,  
That after-musings on this morn's discourse  
Have somewhat changed my sentence. Home, they say,  
Is best for age. I seek it. Eighty years  
I've made my home on horseback. Sirs, farewell.

[*PARMENIO departs.*]

ALEXANDER.

To business ! We have heard of clamours late  
From men with homeward cravings. Let them know  
That, though their service-time is unexpired,  
We grant them to depart, nor that alone,  
But praised of him they served. Two thousand talents

Concede we to the horse ; and to the rest,  
For every man the tenth part of a talent,  
Their pay continuing till on Grecian shores  
They set their feet.

ANTIGONUS.

We're weak without the horsemen.

ALEXANDER.

Or with them, or without them, we are weak ;  
But these, with glory gladden'd and with gain,  
Where'er they move—and wealth will make them restless—  
Shall noise our name, and send our camp recruits  
For each man lost, a score. To Grecian horsemen  
Electing to abide we give three talents,  
Foot-soldiers in proportion. Epocillus  
Escorts them to the coast, and Menes thence  
Shall steer them to Eubœa. Macedonians  
Are free not less.

(*A shout.*)

We bide ! There's none will go.

ALEXANDER.

So be it ! The satrapy of conquer'd Media  
On Oxodates we confer, a Mede,  
But one by King Darius wrong'd—thence safe,

With him, for military government,  
Joining Tlepomenus of Macedon.  
The garrison at Ecbatana late left,  
And with it three battalions of the Phalanx,  
By Cleitus led, will make us soon forget  
Those fissures in our ranks. Lords, fare ye well!  
On the fourth morn once more we chase Darius.  
I've heard that he has traitors in his ranks.  
No friends are they of mine.

---

SCENE IV.—*The Persian Camp.*

BESSUS *and his accomplices having fled*, DARIUS *lies on the ground, pierced by their swords, and bleeding. A Greek soldier gives him water to drink from his helmet.*

---

DARIUS.

Sir, you have stain'd, I fear, your scarf. I thank you!  
For this good office. Kings should have more than thanks  
For service kindly paid.

SOLDIER.

Ye gods! Ye gods!

DARIUS.

My friends have been my foes ; a foe my friend :—  
Likewise your king show'd reverence to my mother :



Tell him I stretch'd to him my hand in death.  
Persia, farewell!

[DARIUS *dies*. ALEXANDER *arrives*  
*with his generals*.

SOLDIER.

Behold the Persian king!

ALEXANDER (*after long silence*).

If that reproof had lodged upon thy brow,  
Or any sneer had curl'd that quiet lip,  
I could have brook'd it better. See, Hephestion,  
How humble he doth look, and unupbraiding;  
How charitable, peaceful, and content!  
What hath he found? An empire he hath lost,  
And lo, he smiles in death! Remove that cloak:  
Lo, there the wounds through which his life-blood rush'd—  
The blood of Cyrus! Traitors foul and fell!  
King, he that caused thy death strove yet to save thee:  
Me too those sacrilegious daggers struck,  
My fame and me, through that deep-trenchèd breast:  
I'll slay them on thy grave.

PHILOTAS.

'Twas true! Darius  
Of Persia's sons was comeliest.

EUMENES.

Of her daughters  
They say his queen was fairest. Issus lost,  
How soon she slept in death !

HEPHESTION.

Alas, Arsinoe !

ALEXANDER (*removing his own mantle*).

Take, crownless monarch, take, insensate clay,  
From whom thine empire like a vesture slid,  
This mantle immemorial of my house ;  
Wear it as thou had'st conquer'd Macedon,  
Yea, wear it in thy grave.  
The king is dead. The royal obsequies  
By ancient use are his successor's care :  
I'll have his body to his mother borne  
With ceremonial of the Persian wont,  
With Magian death-dirge, and procession long,  
The silver altars moving at its head,  
The Sacred Fire ascending—in the rear  
Those mystic youths that emblem night and day,  
Three hundred, and three score, and five. A sun  
For ever rising, o'er the bier shall shine,  
Persia's high pledge of immortality.  
Thus to the burial-place of eastern kings

Darius shall be borne, and with them sleep.  
Why stand ye silent, lords? Battle is battle,  
Kings too must die. To Hecatompylus !  
Hephestion, move we on. This thing is ill :  
But who of men is greater than the Fates?  
Less than my empire what is mine I'd give  
To undo this deed. It shall be expiated.  
Till then I must forget him.

---

SCENE V.—*The Southern Shore of the Caspian.*

PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, CRATERUS, ANTIGONUS, CASSANDER.

---

CRATERUS.

Hyrkania's bears are her best citizens ;  
Their borrow'd coats protect us from her blasts,  
Intolerable else.

CASSANDER.

Her mountains pass'd,  
All else looks gentle, even those hurrying waves,  
Spray-dimm'd and whitening 'neath the hustling blast,  
And the vapours, Fury-like, along them scudding.

PTOLEMY.

Your hills I hate not when they keep their distance ;

When near, they're vile—crazed Nature's bombast vein,  
Or worse, her Delphic vein, suggesting meanings  
Which or she cannot or she will not speak,  
Yearnings unutterable, at least unutter'd,  
Vexatious and disquieting. The edge  
Of yonder cliff is like a Memnon's head  
Seen sideways.

ALEXANDER (*arriving with HEPHESTION*).

'Tis more like Darius' mother  
As once I saw her, gazing on dark skies,  
And dreaming there some face.

HEPHESTION.

Mark, mark, Craterus,  
In the purple glens those wandering isles of light !  
Down each green vale a tempest sweeps, and bears  
A rainbow smoke that cannot make a rainbow,  
Still, as the promontory's gate is reach'd,  
Blown loose in the misty air !

SELEUCUS.

How fresh and biting  
The odour from the weeds on yonder shelf,  
Sway'd by the brine ! No foot of man till now  
Printed these sands ! I err :—on the cave's lintel  
A woman's name !

ALEXANDER.

What! soldiers turn'd to poets!

Well, fancy's best when imping action's wings :—

Forth with your fancies, then! Were gods your slaves,

What fortunes would ye choose? Speak, one and all!

PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, ANTIGONUS, *and* CASSANDER, *cry*  
*aloud together—*

A kingdom!

ALEXANDER.

Why, an empire costs no more!

I'd rather be a hunter on the hills

Than wall'd by one small, limitable kingdom!

The gods you serve have thrift. Note this, Hephestion,

Imagination is economist,

And vastest ends move less the appetite

Than small things near and easier of acqurest.

Say, next, what kingdoms choose ye?

PTOLEMY.

Give me Egypt;

'Tis much in little with its fruitful Nile.

SELEUCUS.

Syria for me : I grant it desert-cumber'd ;

Aye, but 'tis ample!

ANTIGONUS.

Mine be Lesser Asia !

'Tis Greece grown softer—maid to matron changed,  
Asperites subdued—a mould benigner :  
The round green mountains are as thrones of gods :  
The white fane glances o'er the violet sea :  
The sands are golden ore : there wealth and wit  
Have made a pleasant sort of careless bridal.  
I'll build my house on Taurus' slopes that look  
To Aphrodite's isle.

CASSANDER.

For me the old land,  
Our Macedon and Thrace ! The climate's rough ;  
The hearts are sound.

ALEXANDER.

Fair kingdoms, lords, I wish you,  
Albeit not those. A future too have I :  
'Tis dark at once and bright. Yon clouds discern ye?  
The near, and those beyond, snow-white and still,  
Which gaze on us from some austerer world,  
Thronging like phantom kings, with ice-cold crown?  
These nearer clouds are like my daily battles,  
Wherein I ever triumph ; those remote,  
And minatory more, are fates, not fortunes,  
That bide their time. For fortunes and for fates

I stand alike prepared. What mean those horsemen?  
Forth, sirs, and meet them : let Craterus bide,  
Hephestion likewise.

[*The rest depart.*]

These desire a kingdom,  
Yet these are they that most with jealous eye  
Mislike my royal leanings. They misdeem :  
The empire I desired was military,  
And naked as the statues of the gods,  
Not ceremonious, Persian, gilt with pomps,  
Like that which near me draws.  
I saw it coming, and I waved it from me ;  
I march'd to Egypt ; I deferred the time ;  
But these, my fates, are closing gradual round,  
Nor wont am I to fly. Asian and Greek  
Henceforth must be as one. I know my people :  
They'll say, " Shall Persia, now a dotard grown,  
By help of Greece have lordship over Greece  
That scourged her in her prime ? " I answer thus,  
I came to rule a world, and not to make one ;  
My empire is of men.

HEPHESTION.

Sir, Greek is Greek :  
The Greek will feast with Persian or with Mede,  
Will pray with Syrian, or with Bactrian dance,

But equall'd in the ranks of war he'll march  
With Greek alone.

ALEXANDER.

'Tis not this Persia only :—

Assyria, Babylonia, Susiana,  
Armenia, Media,—this we learn but late !  
Greece is to these but as a drop to ocean ;  
She yields me but a handful of recruits :  
I stand confuted by each conquest new,  
Soon won, but kept at cost : horizons fresh  
Outface me still with kingdom beyond kingdom.  
To overrun a world, and then forsake it—  
This might suffice for fame. I seek an empire.

HEPHESTION.

With time your strength——

ALEXANDER.

No friend of mine is Time ;  
I have to build an empire in few years :  
My armies must be Greek at once, and Persian :  
Persia that sees in me a conqueror now,  
Must find in me her king. How win her love ?  
The vanquish'd must connive, or victory's self  
Its own grave digs in the end. Abuses old  
I with far-reaching and vindictive hand



Drag from their pride of place. Barbaric hordes,  
With whom the Persian traffick'd, I hunt down  
For easing of the poor. The tribute old  
Is lessen'd, not increased. Yet Artabazus,  
The faithfullest to Darius while he lived,  
To me now faithful for his country's sake,  
Still whispers, "Wouldst thou win the Persian's love?  
Win first his awe." Never was Persian yet  
Who, empire plain before him, could discern it,  
Though proved by gifts, or patent in destructions,  
Without the obeisance, pageants, adorations,  
That god-ship stamp on earth.

[*The generals return.*]

EUMENES (*holding up a letter*).

From Artabazus.

ALEXANDER (*reading*.)

"Bessus, but late a traitor fugitive,  
More late hath donn'd the Persian diadem,  
The sacred name of Artaxerxes wears,  
And, kinship claiming with the royal house,  
Its awful sceptre lifts. The Bactrians join him."  
So! I foresaw it! Said I not, Hephestion,  
He that would rule them through the sense must rule,  
Must walk apparell'd in their pageants old,  
And rituals of their throne?

HEPHESTION.

I fear 'tis true.

ALEXANDER.

You fear: I laugh: they're not so all unlike us:  
The Greek is proud of self, and, self abated,  
Stands gall'd: the Persian glories in his king,  
And, stinted of his trappings, starves in the cold:  
In either country greatness wears the buskin,  
Plays now his part, who, being great, appears such,  
Now his, the man's that's greater than he seems—  
With worm-like scruples, and with bat-like doubts  
I've traffick'd all too long.

A MESSENGER (*entering*).

From Greece a missive.

ALEXANDER (*reading*).

Antipater writes thus: "Keen-witted Greece  
Your triumphs grudges not: eastward they draw you,  
Imperilling your return. Sparta, but now  
With Thrace confederate, twenty thousand men  
At Megalopolis launch'd: I march'd to meet her:  
Our victory bled us badly."—Battles of flies!

Here's more : " Recruits I fain would send you faster :  
Revolt has left us few."

EUMENES.

Will leave him fewer.

ALEXANDER.

I thank thee, Zeus ! My path is plain henceforward !  
Send edicts, Eumenes, to my eastern realms :  
Bid them to lodge their youths, the best and noblest,  
Straightway in schools where they shall learn at once  
Greek arms, Greek letters. These, their training perfect,  
We with our Phalanx will incorporate,  
Distinctions, save of merit, knowing none.  
Command them that they gird me in three years  
With thirty thousand such. Ere sunset write.

---

SCENE VI.—*The mountains in Aria.*

PHILOTAS, ANTISTHENES *the sophist*, PHYLAX *the physician.*

---

PHILOTAS.

How the cold bites ! When sets the sun, Death's hood  
Descends on yonder snows. Antisthenes,

You'll sup with me. O'er twenty leagues, in Media,  
My hunters spread their nets that I might dine  
While fish from Persia gamboll'd in my tanks :  
Now fare we as we may.

ANTISTHENES.

I'll trust your luck :  
The king, because his soldiers' bread is black,  
Devours hard crusts himself.

PHYLAX.

Great Esculapius !  
Who sinn'd this time ? What drags this idiot hither ?

PHILOTAS.

You know not ! Aristotle, his sage master,  
In every science train'd him, one except :  
He's come abroad to learn geography !

ANTISTHENES.

I suffer'd less tracking Egyptian sands  
To Ammon's fane—his father's.

PHYLAX.

Sickness feign'd I  
And cheated Ammon ! Still my tent I pitch

With Epicurus, or a space beyond,  
Midway his flowery haunt, unvex'd by gods,  
And, peacefuller yet, the innocuous bourn of Nought.  
Religions mean but priestcraft.

ANTISTHENES.

Cobwebs ! Rend them !

PHILOTAS.

I tell you, no ! men must have gods to swear by.

ANTISTHENES.

Here are three atheists ; and the worst are you.

PHYLAX.

Yea, thrice the worst !

PHILOTAS.

I stand by law and order ;  
We cannot live without our " Ho ! " and " Ha ! "  
Religion is a nation's interjection :  
Let statesmen look to that !

PHYLAX.

Statesmen may pass :  
They have this merit—that they war on priests :

Impartial science loathes them both alike,  
Will strangle both—unless they slay each other :  
But here, a priest and statesman, roll'd in one,  
Grow to a god. Oh, to have heard that whisper  
From Ammon's shrine !

PHILOTAS.

The king divulged it not :  
He's great in silence.

ANTISTHENES.

There was heard a rumour—  
By slow degrees it died, but late revives—  
That Zeus, at Ammon served in serpent form,  
Is of this king the sire.

PHYLAX.

A priestly lie !  
I've track'd it to its den. The Mænad women,  
When spring bewitches earth snow-cruled still,  
And the last frosts, resisting, yield to sunshine,  
Partake the madness of that mother old ;  
Then, raging on the Thyrsus-beaten hills,  
O'er Thrace they roam, and Dionysus hymn,  
That god whose altar 'neath the Athenian rock  
Hurls up its smoke while round it sings the chorus

And the Æschylean tragedy, with tales  
Of king-bewildering passion crown'd by fate,  
Freezes men's hearts. Thus raging, fancies black,  
Audacities of nature unfulfill'd  
Inbreathed through those that would be more than nature  
Earth-fires, that mock the lightning of the heavens,  
Assail them. Poison-flowers unscathed they suck,  
And from the serpent cut his poison-fangs  
Amorous of pain, spleenful not less to inflict it,  
Boastful to sport with death ! With these Olympias,  
In her fierce youth, unwed but marriageable,  
Walk'd in her pride, and learn'd their arts, and pass'd  
them :

At Samothracia's Mysteries meeting Philip  
They loved, and wed. In wedlock's stormy dawn,  
At times for sport, at times to flout her lord,  
She tamed a snake, and now for crown would wear it,  
Now for her zone.

ANTISTHENES.

Each man a poet is  
In his own art. Beneath your pestle, Phylax,  
Uleaps a fire-eyed Muse !

PHYLAX.

I've track'd the tale—

ANTISTHENES.

Which Alexander fathers not, but fosters :  
His pride still grows.

PHILOTAS.

Meantime his Persian pomps  
Sharpen Greek daggers. Thus much Dimnus whispers.

ANTISTHENES.

Likewise his passion fits : the royal pages  
Taste these the oftenest. Hermolaus, late,  
While rush'd the king—they hunted—on a boar,  
Flinging a graceless javelin, but well aim'd,  
Laid the beast dead. The king gave word to scourge him :  
This youth has vowed revenge, albeit the wrong  
Is little noised. But hush ! He comes ; say nought ;  
He needs no whetting.

[HERMOLAUS *joins them.*]

PHILOTAS.

Gentle Hermolaus,  
This heinous outrage, dinn'd through camp and court,  
Deplored by all, to me is worse than grievous :  
I knew your father. Silence friends that prate :  
Shames to great houses, bruited once, live long,  
In Macedon long ; longer in garrulous Greece.  
Antisthenes, be true to time, and with you



Bring Hermolaus. Keep me sound, good Phylax !  
I swim in glories, pleasures, golden fortunes :  
One peccant nerve in all this frame ajar,  
What were all these? We've quails—I think—for supper.

---

SCENE VII.—ALEXANDER'S *Tent on the Jaxartes.*

ALEXANDER and CRATERUS.

---

ALEXANDER.

What is it that moves their censures ?

CRATERUS.

Sir, Philotas

Should answer that : their lord of gibes is he.  
The soldiers say that once, to spite a woman,  
He kiss'd a viper's lips. The viper died.  
He's venom-tongued, and mischievous more for this—  
He holds his sneers for truths.

ALEXANDER.

In Egypt first

I learn'd his malice. For his father's sake  
I will'd not his disgrace, and so advanced him :  
I've won him not.

CRATERUS.

He scoffs your Persian pomps ;  
Scoffs more, that legend of your birth divine :  
There are who swear that in the Ammonian fane  
You learn'd the secret.

ALEXANDER.

This was what I learn'd,  
That earth my kingdom is. The legend's little ;  
Baseless 'tis not, nor now unseasonable.  
Whence comes the soul? We know not. What if souls  
Heroic, from the great heart of some god  
Forth-flashing as a beam from sun, or star,  
Blend, thus detach'd, with soul-expectant frames  
Worthiest such mate, and stamp the demi-god,  
While meaner souls by streams Lethean wait?

CRATERUS.

All men are children of the Power Divine.

ALEXANDER.

All, ere their birth, win a creative touch  
From hand divine. The hand is not the heart :  
If heroes issue from the heart of gods,  
As from the head of Zeus Athenè sprang,  
I say they are sons of gods. Fathers we name

The parents of these earthly bulks ;—why then  
Grudge to our spirits' sire a father's title ?  
This is that truth which, in its mean disguise,  
My soldiers recognize.

CRATERUS.

Philotas saith

'Tis base to kneel before the sceptred hand.

ALEXANDER.

Because himself is base. This is the baseness,  
To quick or dead, the sceptred or unsceptred,  
To yield the meed of worship undeserved :  
From them that have deserved it to withhold it  
Is theft, and may be sacrilege. Who comes ?

[HEPHESTION *and* PERDICCAS *enter hurriedly.*]

PERDICCAS.

Dimnus, a known conspirator, and proven—

ALEXANDER.

I heard it three hours since.

HEPHESTION.

Dimnus is dead :

He sware that, living, they should never take him.

ALEXANDER.

That's ill.

PERDICCAS.

Philotas with him schemed the plot.

ALEXANDER.

I saw Philotas ; with his crime I charged him :  
He knelt ; he wept ; protested innocence ;  
The rumour he had deem'd an empty tale :  
I sent him forth absolved.

PERDICCAS.

That absolution  
This letter cancels. Sir, 'tis from Parmenio :  
He weighs the plot ; approves it ; caution urges  
Lest guilt discover'd wreck his son and him :  
We found it 'mid the traitor's papers. Read !

ALEXANDER (*after reading*).

What is it that you demand ?

PERDICCAS.

This man, Philotas,  
By you from dust uplifted to the heights,  
This man who might have flown, by preference base  
And native instinct, creeping through your camp,  
Hath, like the worm which tracks his way in slime,



ALEXANDER (*after musing*).

We grant them both demands. Call in those Indians.

---

SCENE VIII.—*On the Jaxartes.*

PHILOTAS *in prison*, and PHYLAX.

---

PHILOTAS.

You've let me blood full oft—cured many a headache  
The king with sharper steel than yours, old friend,  
Will cure to-day's. The surfeit long of life  
Ceases at set of sun. Can'st cure my heartache?

PHYLAX.

'Tis vengeance you demand?

PHILOTAS.

You've read my soul,  
That sitting in mine eyes and all ways turning  
To watch those dreadful ministers of fate,  
Sees something still behind. 'Twould sweeten death!

PHYLAX.

I pledge to you this hand.

PHILOTAS.

But can I trust you?

They say the mirthful nature does not love ;  
And yet I think I somewhat loved you, Phylax :  
No hypocrite at least were you. That knew I.

PHYLAX.

You'd have me kill this king?

PHILOTAS.

Not him—Hephestion!

'Tis there he's vulnerable. Be it done  
When the Alexandrian star is at its highest.  
That too will set.

PHYLAX.

I have pledged my faith.

PHILOTAS.

Remember!

An ice-film gathers on my shivering blood.  
Oh happy days of youth! They'll laugh at me,  
A shadow 'mid the Shades, as I have laugh'd  
At Homer's ghosts bending to victim blood  
A sieve-like throat incapable of joy!  
Tell me these things are fables. I'd not live

A second time ; for life's too dangerous !  
We come from nothing ; and another nothing,  
A hoary Hunger, couchant at Death's gate,  
Waits to devour us.

PHYLAX

*(Placing his hand on the heart of PHILOTAS).*

Slowly beats the heart :—

The failure's there.

PHILOTAS.

Murderers ! The law's against them !  
For if that plot I knew, or if I will'd it,  
I spared to join it. Murderers !—lawless murderers !  
I tripp'd an inch at this side Fortune's goal:—  
Parmenio king, his successor were I.

PHYLAX.

Their plea is equity—the culprit's plea  
When fails his law.

PHILOTAS.

Is that a jibe ? I know not.  
He needs must jeer and gibber. Vengeance ! Vengeance !  
Happy the serpent that with death for death  
Enriches its last pang. Olympias only  
Its tooth escaped. Once more I laugh ! Forget not—  
I've left you in my will a hundred talents.  
Ah, hark ! a step—



SCENE IX.—*A Hill close to the Jaxartes.*

ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, EUMENES.

---

HEPHESTION.

Beyond that infinite, pale, grassy plain  
Rise those white peaks like pyramids o'er sands ;—  
Is this your northern limit ?

ALEXANDER.

Scythia's horse  
Watch still their chance. They are no way barbarous :  
I guess them at twelve thousand. Stealthily,  
In ever widening gyres they near the bank,  
Poor gilded swarms in their warmthless sun :—  
I've baulk'd their game. Resume we our dispute !  
What if the race of gods began with men ?  
If Nature, evermore through strife educating  
Stronger from strong, throned on Olympus, first  
The heroic-proved of men as demi-gods,  
And these through strife work'd out the gods that rule ?  
Concede me this as true, and man's ambition  
Kindred may claim with gods.

HEPHESTION.

True ! Never, never !  
Greatness, be sure, came never from below :  
That thought would drag from heaven itself its greatness :



ALEXANDER.

A race of gods hath fallen :  
Then Zeus in turn may fall. I find for gods  
No thrones secure ; to man's advance no limit ;  
No certain truth amid contending rites ;  
No base for Faith.

HEPHESTION.

Then man must live by Hope.

ALEXANDER.

And whence our hope ?

HEPHESTION.

From all things good around us  
From all things fair—the brightness of the world,  
The glory of its rivers and its seas,  
The music in the wandering of its winds,  
The magic in the spring-flowers fresh accost,  
The gladdening sweetness and pure grace of woman,  
The questioning eyes of childhood. With one voice  
They preach one hope—that Virtue shall be crown'd  
One day, and Truth be known.

ALEXANDER.

The trumpet ! Hark !  
We Greeks must wrangle in the battle's mouth !

*Alexander the Great.*

111

Six kingdoms have I clutch'd within two years ;  
The seventh shall be the greatest.

ANTIGONUS (*entering*).

Tidings, sire !

The Satrap of Aria yields submission.

[PERDICCAS *and* CRATERUS *enter*.]

ALEXANDER.

The Satrap keeps his office. Speak, Craterus :  
The Assembly of the Army, hath it judg'd ?

CRATERUS.

The court due order of procedure follow'd ;  
And, spite the wrathful host that storm'd around,  
Pronounced not judgment till Philotas, first  
Heard in his own defence, but after, tortured,  
Had made confession full, his proper guilt,  
The crime of Dimnus and of Hermolaus,  
His sire's complicity. The traitor push'd  
Before its time the plot though hatch'd by others,  
Lest he who guards your treasure-house far off  
Might drop, ere done the deed. The High Tribunal  
Proceeded to the award—death to Philotas,  
Death to Parmenio, and the rest. The host  
Raged next for joy ; so oft his pride had gall'd them ;

So oft in frost-winds had they stood while pass'd  
His endless waggon train. His sister's husband  
Raised the first stone.

ALEXANDER.

How died he ?

CRATERUS.

Ill enough.

PERDICCAS.

A traitor died this day.

CRATERUS.

A traitor proved.

ALEXANDER.

A man whose death was needful died this day ;  
Likewise a man whose guilt was probable  
To certainty well nigh—but yet not certain,  
Since cowards, tortured, may confess things false.  
Philotas or conspired or else connived,  
And each of these is capital, or changed  
From keen to dullard in a sort that's death  
In nature's capital code. I, in his place  
Had ta'en small umbrage at my days abridged :  
There lived nor scope nor purpose in his life  
Which death could mar.

CRATERUS.

For instant doom they clamour'd,  
Fearing your leniency—

ALEXANDER.

I am not lenient :  
When prodigal I've seem'd, and lax in pardons,  
'Twas with a politic aim. Nor am I cruel :  
Example needful, or to daunt the proud,  
Blood have I shed to the bound extreme of justice,  
Seldom beyond. I say not that the bound  
In wrath, or peril never was transgress'd.  
No will it was of mine to try this man :  
But, judged and sentenced, never had I spared him  
Certain thenceforward in my blood to seek,  
Likeliest at some high crisis of my empire,  
Ablution for his name. Lo, there! They launch  
A flag of truce.

PTOLEMY (*arriving*).

The Scythians send us envoys  
With proffer of firm peace. Their terms are these :  
North of the river their old hunting-grounds  
Theirs to remain :—this granted, they, in turn,  
Acknowledge, sire, for yours, the manifold realms  
From that wide water to the mountain bound

And limitless beyond to the Indian deep,  
Thenceforth your sworn allies.

**ALEXANDER.**

Their terms are just ;  
 Accept them, and engross. Those Indian Heralds—

ANTIGONUS (*entering*).

That murderer, Satabarzanes, is slain ;  
And Spitamenes—honouring his own head—  
Surrenders Bessus.

**ALEXANDER.**

Let the self-same court  
That judged Philotas judge this bloodier traitor ;  
When sentenced, be he sent to Sysigambis,  
The dead king's mother : her award is mine.  
Alas for old Parmenio !

HEPHESTION.

**Bid him live!**

**ALEXANDER.**

His guilt is mix'd and tangled with that other's:  
If spared the sire, the son was foully slain.

HEPHESTION.

The time to come——

ALEXANDER.

As ignorantly on this,  
And in its ignorance as confidently,  
Shall pass its judgment as on things beside :  
Its plaudits I shall have for things ill done :  
Its censure for the needful and the just :  
Too much, no doubt, of both.

HEPHESTION.

Slay not Parmenio!

ALEXANDER.

Shall I, for propping of a flag-staff bent,  
Trouble a half-raised empire's base? Hephestion!  
Save that I know thee in the battle-field  
Except myself the foremost, there are times  
When I could deem thee weakling. To your tasks,  
Friends, one and all.

[*The generals depart.*]

Hephestion's cause is stronger than he knows :  
Parmenio's death will much perturb the army ;  
Yet he must die. He'll hear of his son's death  
Ere my best speed could reach Ecbatana :  
The troops around him there are as his children,



And, with the imperial treasury at his beck,  
Nations will be his friends.  
Parmenio's death will much perturb the army:  
New wars will aptliest teach it to forget—  
To India then! Thus stands my doubt resolved.  
To that through all this tanglement I leant,  
Yet knew it not till now.  
Yon priest at Hiersolyma, 'tis true,  
Spake much of Term and Limit. That's for others:  
To grasp a world for me is feasible;  
To keep a half-world, not.

---

SCENE X.—*Susa. The Cypress Cemetery.*

ARSINOE, AMASTRIS.

---

AMASTRIS.

Return ere long, my gentle litter-bearers—  
How cool this cypress shade! how fair this spot  
So soon to be my grave! Chide not, Arsinoe!  
I would not die; I would not be unhappy;  
I would live blest, and making blest. Ah me!  
I think, I think that I was gathering strength  
Till came those tidings from Arbela's field

Of my brave brothers dead. Others I loved :  
I loved but these in hope.

ARSINOE.

Hope still, my cousin :  
Hope more! The day that lifts you from these arms  
Will give you back your brothers !

AMASTRIS.

Hope I have,  
Though scarce like yours. Oh for a hope strong-wing'd,  
Swan-like to soar, lighting that region dim  
Eclipsed by death's cold shade ! I loved the Songs :  
Am I ungrateful if at times I feel  
Like one that trusts and has not found ?

ARSINOE.

Beloved,  
Things greater than the things we loved and found not  
One day shall find us. Let me see your book :  
'Tis that you read in Tyre's old palace garden—

AMASTRIS.

The day we saw him last.

ARSINOE.

Hephestion ?

AMASTRIS.

Him :

Your eyes grow large.

ARSINOE.

That day you scarce were near us.

AMASTRIS.

He better than the maiden loved the child :  
I left him with you then and many a time  
Before that morning. Cousin, here's a song :  
Read it ; my eyes grow dim.

ARSINOE.

It is of Cyrus.

AMASTRIS.

We'll read not that. Assyrians wept that day  
As we weep now : the Babylonian air  
Was thick with sobs : above Chaldæa's plain  
Like a great wind went forth the orphans' cry.  
Ungenerous are the bards.

ARSINOE.

And for that cause  
Unjust. Here's one that's not a song of triumph.

[*Reads.*]

MARRIAGE SONG.

I.

Love begins upon the heights,  
As on tree-tops in the spring  
April with green foot alights  
While the birds are carolling :  
Aye, but April ends with May :  
Love must have the marriage-day !

II.

Love begins upon the heights,  
As o'er snowy summits sail  
First the dewy matin lights  
Destined soon to reach the vale :  
Aye, but maidens must not grieve  
That morn of love hath noon and eve.

III.

Love is Dream and Vision first :  
Proud young Love the earth disdains ;  
But his cold streams, mountain-nursed,  
Warm them in the fruitful plains  
Ere the marriage-day is sped :  
Peal the bells ! The bride is wed !

AMASTRIS.

If Love indeed begins upon the heights  
'Twere well he ended there. His starry feet  
Would thus their splendour best retain. It may be  
Maidens that, loving well, unwedded die,  
In this may be more blest than those who find  
Love's loveliest human home.

ARSINOE.

I would not wed ;  
And you from many a suit have turn'd—scarce gently.

AMASTRIS.

Arsinoe ! you will wed, who would not wed ;  
I die, who would not die. Our life's amiss !  
I must not say it :—no, our life is gentle : .  
You'd rather live ill-match'd than fail in duty ;  
I'd rather die than prove to friendship false,  
Of love unworthy. Each will have her best.

ARSINOE.

Oh friend, my earliest friend, my best ! how much  
To you I owe ! how hard had been without you !  
In the deep bosom of your boundless love  
I breathed a generous and a healing clime :  
In all our sorrows you, yourself an orphan,

Out of your poverty for me had wealth,  
And pitied me so sweetly that perforce  
I ceased myself to pity, and smiled through tears.  
You only lived in others. Well they served you,  
The Songs you loved so well ! With light they clothed  
you :  
In them you bathed as in some wood-girt stream  
Crystalline ever. I, upon the bank,  
But felt the dew upon its breath, the drops  
Shower'd from your hand :—they cool'd an aching fore-  
head.

## AMASTRIS.

Ah ! ere we clothe us with that water-light,  
We drop the warm, protecting garb of earth !  
Who feign'd the nymphs feign'd them invulnerable  
By bitter north-wind, or the hunter's dart.  
My mother said the Songs would teach me sorrow—  
They taught me sorrow and joy ; would leave me weak—  
They left me weak and strong. I lived in others ;  
But you for others lived. To this green spot  
(Should he return) you'll lead him, my Arsinoe !  
You'll give him here this book of songs :—he knew it—  
Read him some few—not this, for he is blithesome,  
This song as plaintive as the voice of child  
Heard lonely from the harvest field afar

When twilight wraps the land. Bordering the scroll  
Are golden stars, and little pictured fancies :  
Here is the mother-bird that feeds her brood  
From her own breast ; and here's a foolish young one  
That bends above the on-rushing stream, athirst,  
And yet afraid to drink :—the spray is bending :—  
Most are the work of others : one was mine,  
Ere yet this hand had learn'd its trick of shaking.  
If you should name my name, mark well his face  
So bright that day, and note if he remembers.  
Say that we spake of him—that I was happy  
In life—in death. You'll say not that I loved him.  
Give me one kiss. You're welcome, merry maidens,  
Albeit so soon returned. Set down my litter.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Susa, in front of the Palace.*

ANTIGONUS, EUMENES, SELEUCUS, CRATERUS,  
PENCESTAS, PHYLAX.

---

ANTIGONUS.

At Susa once again ! Why, this is Greece !  
One time it seem'd the eastern edge of earth ;—  
Measured by that great space we've tracked, 'tis home.

EUMENES.

Six years ago we gazed on yonder palace :  
In three we conquer'd Asia's eastern half ;  
India in three !

SELEUCUS.

India ! once more I see it  
Once more I tread its palm-groves and its plains,  
I scan the red sun through the sandy mist,  
And hear the lion's roar. Our earlier conquests  
Were prelude notes—no more.



AMYNTAS.

I am late arrived :

Recount the tale.

SELEUCUS.

'Twas victory, day by day :

'Twas victory till, the appetite itself  
Sate with triumphs, in our host remain'd  
Nought but the base uxorious homeward craving.  
The Indus and Hydaspes we had cross'd,  
The Hydraotes and the Acecines ;  
Then, as a gathering tide, or desert flame  
That nearer draws, was heard a deepening murmur :  
And as on banks of Hyphasis we stood  
That murmur found a voice. The army sware  
Eastward to march no more. The king but smiled,  
And bade them make encampment, and take rest.  
Next day, at noon, he flung from him that strength  
Of words which ne'er till then resistance met  
And, ceasing, round him look'd with eye ablaze.  
Then first in that strong face wonder I saw :  
He gazed, and pass'd into his tent alone.  
Lonely he sat three days. The silence 'twas  
Taught him the host's resolve.

AMYNTAS.

What held it silent ?

SELEUCUS.

Fate, or the reverence of remorseful gods  
That knew their man. Into the royal tent  
At last that Indian Mystic forced his way :  
What pass'd none knows. At eve the king gave word :—  
Ere long we sailed a-down Hydaspes' flood.

ANTIGONUS.

Hydaspes never saw a sight like that !  
An army on each side, and, in the midst,  
Two thousand ships !

PEUCESTAS.

Forests were fell'd to build them !  
The winds will miss their playmates many an age.  
The nations shiver'd that beheld our coming,  
Sibas, Ossadian, Sogdian, Sudracæ ;—  
The Malli fought the best.

SELEUCUS.

The world's great scales  
Trembled that day ! Our king—I see him still—  
By him three friends—a host of foes in front !  
'Twas you that saved him !

PEUCESTAS.

'Twas that Argive shield  
In fortunate hour pluck'd from the Trojan fane.  
I held it high : it triumph'd !

SELEUCUS.

Down we sail'd  
To the ocean flood, and made our vows, and buried  
The sacrificial goblet in the wave.  
Next, month by month we track'd Gedrosian sands :  
1145/ The army of Semiram~~is~~ slept beneath them,  
The army of great Cyrus. Thousands died :  
The rest push'd on. At last green-girt Carmania  
Embower'd us in her ever-flowering vales ;  
And, chapleted with vine, westward we sped,  
Till, past all hope, our fleet we kenn'd and clasp'd  
Old comrades mourn'd as dead.

PTOLEMY.

We have told our story,  
And made an honest boast. Our toils have rest :  
Not less the king may find that peace hath dangers  
Worse than the worst in war.

ANTIGONUS.

The gods are with him.

---

SELEUCUS.

The gods of Greece are with him, but not all ;  
And gods can change, like men.

ANTIGONUS.

'Tis true ! let none  
That's pious trust the gods, however friendly,  
But, sharp-eyed watch and serve them.

PHYLAX.

O ye gods !  
I'll keep a dog to help me at my watch,  
Noting your humours ! Lords, if danger threaten,  
'Tis Persia breeds the danger. Orxines—  
There was a Persian, noble, brave, their richest  
Satrap of Persis, faithful to our king—  
He's dead, and by the king's command, and wherefore ?  
Why, 'twas a cry from bones, from offal, dust !  
Pasagidæ we pass'd as home we march'd : 292 /  
We found the tomb of Cyrus sack'd for gold :—  
A crime they call'd it !

PTOLEMY.

Persia's not the danger :  
He's vulnerable inly, not without,  
Through that fierce will which makes of wrath a madness

Turns love to doom. Hephestion's brave and wise ;  
He takes an ample sweep of virtues ; still  
In valour he's not greater than Seleucus,  
In insight than Craterus : yet the king  
More loves him than the total host beside.  
Such love is peril : 'tis to keep two bodies,  
Two separate tenements of one frail life,  
And obvious each to Fortune's shaft—or Fate's.

SELEUCUS.

Phylax, what mean you by those twinkling eyes ?  
You are bright, yet dark. In you two Demons kiss  
With love malign.

PHYLAX.

Your pardon, mighty lord ;  
I smiled at perils bred from the affections :  
I've heard of such ere now, but met them not.

A MESSENGER (*entering*).

The council meets at sunset, lords.

*Several* GENERALS.

Make speed !

[*They depart.*]

PHYLAX.

Philotas, you were wiser than I knew !

SCENE II. — *Palace at Susa.*

ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION.

---

ALEXANDER.

The time is come ; you stare ;—the time decreed ;  
Of Empire safe henceforth, or lost for ever :  
With a fierce joy I clasp this chief of battles  
Which dares me in my day supposed of peace.  
What think you of my fortunes ?

HEPHESTION.

More and more  
They are like yourself : they wear a royal aspect.

ALEXANDER.

False ! I am substance ; and my fortunes hollow !  
To keep that little handful of my Greeks  
In girl-proud severance from their conquer'd world—  
A dream it was, a dream !

HEPHESTION.

You said so early.

ALEXANDER.

To dispossess them of that dream-dominion ;—  
I told you this must be :—then you—Craterus—  
Seleucus—all—conspired in one reply,  
“The Greek will rather die.”

HEPHESTION.

We knew, and said it.

ALEXANDER.

I sought evasions ; I deferr'd the time ;  
I march'd to Scythia, and to India march'd,  
Trusting that mellowing years might work a change.  
Prerogatives I link'd, yet kept asunder,  
To native hands conceding civil functions,  
Reserving still the warlike for the Greeks :  
Return'd, what find I ? base division's fruits :  
The cry comes up :—discords, corruptions, slaughters,  
The honour of great houses violated,  
Wasted their lands.  
These things must end : this missive comes to end them :  
Three years ago I pledged my royal word  
Asian recruits with Greeks should equal stand :—  
A month, and thirty thousand join my ranks :  
Come weal, come woe, I keep my sacred pledge.

HEPHESTION.

All Greece will rise in storm.

ALEXANDER.

A storm shall meet it.

HEPHESTION.

Till now you have lived for ever in their praise.

ALEXANDER.

To breathe applauses is to breathe that air  
By breath of men defiled : I stand, and stood  
On the mountain-tops, breathing the breath of gods.  
Fear nought : I see my way. Those Asian Empires  
Were things mechanic.

HEPHESTION.

Greek and Asian equal'd,  
The Greek supremacy has died at birth.

ALEXANDER.

You see but half. Equality, when based  
On merit, means supremacy of Greek ;  
For mind is merit, and the great Greek mind  
In nature's right, supreme. Our Greece shall rule  
Like elemental gods with nature blent,  
Yet not in nature merged.



HEPHESTION.

The first inception—

ALEXANDER.

I had foreseen it ; and I'll have no first :  
Three changes I have welded into one.  
Thanks to Parmenio's death, the treasure's mine :  
It buys an Empire's safety. Half my Greeks  
Stagger beneath a load of debt : I'll pay it :  
That's change the first. I'll wed the races next :  
My bravest and my best—that's change the second—  
Shall marry Asian maids, by me so dower'd  
As Hope had fear'd to hope. My generals, likewise,  
Shall mate the noblest ladies in the land ;  
Which done, all war henceforth were war domestic.  
At that high marriage-feast mine earlier pledge  
Shall stand redeem'd. Persian shall rise to Greek :  
Aye, but the Greek shall rise to Asian kings !  
That's change the third. These three I blend in one.

HEPHESTION.

The gods inspired that scheme ! Their help go with it !

ALEXANDER.

The gods are with me ever : but the Fates—  
Those whom the immortals dread, I too may fear.

HEPHESTION.

Touching the gods, I mark in you a change :  
At first you honour'd much this Persian Faith,  
A Faith that soar'd, and yet went deep, insisting  
For ever on the oppugnancy divine  
'Twixt Good and Ill, unlike those nymph-like Fancies  
That, draped in Faith's grave garb, yet loosely zoned,  
But glide above the surfaces of things,  
And tutor us with smiles. That time is past.  
Egyptian rites and Asian still you honour,  
Persia's distrust.

ALEXANDER.

The man that Empire founds  
Must measure all things by the needs of Empire :  
This Magian Faith will prove refractory :  
That truth it claims to hold, and hold alone,  
Burns in its eye, 'and eyes of them that serve it,  
A portion of their never-quenchèd Fire :  
Its spirit is the spirit of domination :  
I'll own no Persian worship.

HEPHESTION.

Is this just ?  
You smile on Persia's court, upon its camp,  
Its nobles, and its merchants, and its peasants ;  
Upon the noblest thing it hath you frown.

ALEXANDER.

'Tis so. I ever make my choice of foes  
Not less than friends. I know this Faith must hate me :  
Like it there's none : the rest at heart are brothers ;  
Their priests alike contented to be ruled,  
Their rites not hard to reconcile. Moreover,  
I know Calanus now. The Indian seer  
Who scorns both kingly throne and beggar's cloak,  
Contemplative unvested 'neath the palms,  
Seems then the Magian more abstruse in lore  
And seated farther back in lordlier depths  
Of world-defying pride.

HEPHESTION.

His pride I doubt not :  
When first you found him on the banks of Indus  
In meditation 'mid his brethren throned,  
They to the greeting of a king vouchsafed not  
So much as this—the uplifting of their eyes.

ALEXANDER.

Not less he join'd my march—though on conditions.

HEPHESTION.

The Indian's faith may soar as high as heaven :  
His pride is narrow as the Cynic's tub.

ALEXANDER.

You hate Calanus.

HEPHESTION.

What I love is Truth :

'Tis great : and therefore humbleness must win it,  
Not pride, if won at all.

ALEXANDER.

This only know we—

We walk upon a world not knowable  
Save in those things which knowledge least deserve,  
Yet capable, not less, of task heroic.  
My trust is in my work : on that I fling me,  
Trampling all questionings down.

HEPHESTION.

From realm to realm

You've chased the foe like dreams.

ALEXANDER.

I sometimes think

That I am less a person than a power,  
Some engine in the right hand of the gods,  
Some fateful wheel that, round in darkness rolling,  
Knows this—its work ; but not that work's far scope.  
Hephestion, what is life? My life, since boyhood,  
Hath been an agony of means to ends :

An ultimate end I find not. For that cause,  
On-reeling in the oppression of a void,  
At times I welcome what I once scarce brook'd,  
The opprobrium of blank sleep—  
Enough of this. Discoursing of my plan  
Its needfullest part I noticed not : you guess it :  
My marriage must the rest inaugurate,  
And yours, with mine : our captains, one and all,  
Will shape their course by yours.

HEPHESTION.

I understand not.

ALEXANDER.

Brothers, till now, we are not, save in love :  
Within our children's veins one blood shall flow,  
Children of sisters. Now you know my meaning.

HEPHESTION.

I hear a music as of gods borne nigh ;  
See nought.

ALEXANDER.

The scheme's not policy alone :  
'Tis expiation likewise. Hearken, Hephestion :  
Above the body of Darius dead  
I vow'd his Royal House to re-instate,  
My own just rights secured, nor hid my vow,

Sending Darius' corse to Sisygambis,  
The mother of the murder'd, for the tomb.  
Of those fair sisters—children then they were—  
The younger I selected, for her brows  
Destining my crown. Arsinoe to you  
(I named her once, but thought the theme unwelcome)  
My fancy gave. I find this may not be :  
Old Persia rests on laws immutable :  
The eldest daughter of the Royal House  
Must share the oldest throne on earth, and chief,  
Her sire's except. A marriage less than this  
To Persia insult were, to Greece a weakness.  
These things are nought. The maids are good alike :  
You'll have the lovelier bride, the nobler I  
In Asian heraldry. That setting sun  
Dazzles my eyes, or else you're pale, Hephestion,  
You that paled never <sup>^</sup>Gedrosian sands :— *'mid*  
We buried many there. Deny the army  
The lists of the dead.

SELEUCUS (*entering*).

So please the king, his council——

ALEXANDER.

Hence ! To the council I divulge this marriage :  
And show this missive from the agèd queen,

So lofty, sad, yet grateful. I had forgotten :—  
Those spoils by Xerxes filched, those statues twinn'd,  
Harmodius and Aristogeiton styled  
(I deem them unauthentic, like the merit  
Of those seditious boors whose names they boast),  
That shine in brass before the palace portals,  
To Athens send, with orders that they stand  
By Theseus' temple. Be it done this night.

[*Exit ALEXANDER.*]

HEPHESTION.

'Twas all but won : 'tis lost, and lost for ever !  
To her no loss : she knew not of my love :  
I half foresaw, and sent her never message.  
'Twas but a child ! Ah yes, yet childish eyes  
Through darkness shining could illume my dreams,  
Star-like could pierce the low-hung battle-cloud,  
In victory's hour could wake in me a heart  
Tenderly righteous. Palace of Old Tyre !  
Dark groves wherein the night-bird sang by day !—  
'Twas but a child ! Ah yes, yet childish hands  
'Mid burning wastes could bind my brow with wreaths  
Cold as the northern morn ; a childish voice,  
Still heard 'mid Lydian measures, could expel  
Their venom'd softness leaving them but plaintive.  
Must all end thus ? Oh mockery, mockery, mockery !

Shall one be zealous for my body's health,  
Make inquisition of mine alter'd cheek,  
Adventure to exalt that fame I laugh at,  
The dignities I spurn, my golden fortunes,  
Yet, there where only lives my spirit, lay  
A hand more callous than his courser's hoof,  
And crush that thing he feels not?—Down, base thoughts !  
The crisis of his fortunes is upon him :  
I will not fail him at his utmost need :  
His love is with me, though he knew me never—  
Ill time were this, ill time for traitor's work !  
Her duty's plain : necessity goes with it—  
The thing that is must be.

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## SCENE III.

PHYLAX (*alone*).  

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Hephestion is daily more hard of access. I know not how I shall approach him near enough to wind him in my toils. Ho ! sirrah ! [*to his page*] know you any among them that attend on Hephestion ?

## PAGE.

Sir, there is among them a youth, Peitho by name, one with as many humours as a monkey. Many a time hath



he kept the suitors of Hephestion waiting three hours in the ante-room while we played at games.

PHYLAX.

Play with him to-morrow, and lose. Give him these gold pieces. Tell him that thy master hath heard much of his abilities, and holds him in esteem.

---

SCENE IV.—*Palace at Susa.*

SISYGAMBIS, *the Magian* ASTAR.

---

ASTAR.

Madam, fear nought : she'll know the right, and do it :  
No Greek is she, nimble of spirit, but small :  
Her mind is spacious, and her heart is strong :  
In all things still she sees the thing essential.  
Such is the royal nature.

SISYGAMBIS.

For this marriage  
The royal in her nature is ~~N~~ against it.  
She neither loves the Greek, nor leans to marriage.  
She's younger than her years, albeit, a child,  
Older she seem'd.

ASTAR.

Madam, in duty and courage  
She's older than her mother at her death,  
And less through weakness of her sex dependent.  
She will not wreck the realm.

SISYGAMBIS.

She comes : farewell.

[ASTAR *departs.* ARSINOE *enters,*  
*and, after kneeling, sits at the feet*  
*of SISYGAMBIS.*]

O large and lustrous eyes, through tears up-gazing,  
What find you in these aged eyes of mine,  
Murky and dim, these wan, discrownèd brows,  
Worthy such sweet regard? Large eyes, gaze on !  
You see dead Persia, and her fallen House :  
Their monument am I.

ARSINOE.

Mother ! my mother !

SISYGAMBIS.

That name you gave me when your mother died :  
It reach'd me first from younger lips than yours :  
It was not mine to kiss those lips in death :  
Another closed those eyes.

ARSINOE.

Mother ! my mother.

SISYGAMBIS.

To them that with officious zeal presumed,  
Whispering of comfort, thus I made reply,  
"He died contending for this Persian realm :  
Comfort, save that, I spurn."

ARSINOE.

Though earth were ashes  
That comfort still remains. We needs must weep ;  
We need not fear, methinks, nor hate, nor murmur.

SISYGAMBIS.

The strongest hand of earth let fall the sceptre,  
And the world shudder'd like a church profaned,  
Then from the gulf there rose a voice, "That sceptre  
A slender hand shall lift"; and I survived.

ARSINOE.

Whose hand?

SISYGAMBIS.

The hand that lies across my knees :  
This missive's heavy with a royal suit :  
The Greek king claims that hand.

ARSINOE.

He claim it !—Never !

SISYGAMBIS.

Then from a Persian hand comes Persia's doom :  
This bridal had restored her Royal House.

ARSINOE.

It was the Greek king laid it low, my mother.

SISYGAMBIS.

That laid it low, and now that fain would raise it :  
The Greeks have given consent.

ARSINOE.

The Greeks consent !

The Greeks ! Dispose the Greeks of Persia's daughters ?  
I'd have them nor for arbiters, nor subjects !  
Of all those Greeks, I know but one, one only,  
Not boastful, shallow of heart, untrue, ignoble—  
Hephestion ; him who charm'd for us at Tyre  
Sadness to peace. I think, if he has sisters,  
They are hard to win.

SISYGAMBIS.

Hephestion weds your sister.

ARSINOE.

Hephestion weds my sister !

SISYGAMBIS.

Woos, and weds her.

You love your sister : does her marriage please you ?

ARSINOE.

I know not.

SISYGAMBIS.

Or perhaps displease ?

ARSINOE.

I know not.

SISYGAMBIS.

These marriages must be, or both, or neither :

By Persia's law the princess eldest-born

Must fill earth's proudest throne : that throne invokes  
you.

This king is proud, we know : if stern he be,

The king's one friend will teach you how to win him :

Your sister's husband needs must be your brother.

ARSINOE.

There's sweetness in that thought. Oh mother, mother !

SISYGAMBIS.

Now that your hands are from your face removed  
The pallor's less.

ARSINOE.

Oh mother ! Spare to urge me !  
Scarce for love's sake, methinks, could I surrender  
That maiden life, so holy, calm, and clear :  
I cannot wed, not loving.

SISYGAMBIS.

I have done.  
The nobly-modest usage of the East  
Left marriages to parents. Yours are dead :  
And therefore you are free.  
This day a pact is broken with a grave :  
It was a dead king, not a king that lives,  
Who made this marriage : in his death he conquer'd.  
Earth's victor stood above a shape sword-pierced :  
The royal blood he saw, the blood of Persia,  
And lo, the conqueror changed to penitent :  
That hour he vow'd, his onward march suspended,  
To chase the murderer's steps from land to land  
Thenceforth avenger. This too, this, he vow'd,  
To set thy race, Darius, on thy throne

Partaken, not usurp'd. The tidings reach'd me,  
Child, with your father's corse.

ARSINOE.

'Tis past ! My father !  
Forgive this base deserter of thy blood,  
Trivial impugner of thy sacred will,  
Withstander of thy country's peace and greatness !  
Write quick that I consent.

*[ARSINOE moves to the palace window. The  
Queen-mother writes. As her letter is  
finished ARSINOE returns.]*

SISYGAMBIS.

You've been a gazer on our Persian heavens :  
The stars are in your face. 'Tis sad no longer.

ARSINOE.

The tears which I should weep are bright on yours.

SISYGAMBIS.

Age frets at all. Whoe'er had been your husband  
It may be I had wept. Persia is saved.

SCENE V.—*Susa.*

ALEXANDER, CALANUS.

---

ALEXANDER.

Father, think well of it. Our Faith offends you.

CALANUS.

'Tis a child's babble : and a child were he  
That either loved or loathed it. Wisdom's sons  
(None else in things divine have serious part)  
Can mark the shadows dance upon the dust,  
With unchanged brow.

ALEXANDER.

My race belongs to Greece  
Of the kingly age alone. Commend you Persia ?

CALANUS.

A priest of Persia bows his head to kings.  
One time their Magians, at a king's command,  
With their great order linked an alien Greek  
Themistocles by name. Their wisdom's earthly :  
Their Faith is but a law, and not a thought :  
Their god a king they make, a rival give him,  
An Ahriman with Ormuzd still at feud,



Vexing with war the everlasting Rest,  
The One Existence in and under all,  
(For all things else but seem, and are illusions)  
The Intelligence unmoved, whose thoughts are things,  
Who dreams, and worlds are made.

ALEXANDER.

Is Egypt nobler?

CALANUS.

Egypt had wisdom once : her kings have slain it ;  
With them her priests connived, guiltier than they :  
They shared with kings ; and government was all.  
Egypt a kingdom is, and kingdoms pass :  
A race alone survives. Son, what would'st thou ?

ALEXANDER.

A single kingdom, one o'er all the earth.

CALANUS.

As much of earth as shall suffice for grave  
Is man's, my son—no more. The on-striding foot  
No whither tends. The way is up, not onward.  
Ten years you have wasted conquering half the world.

ALEXANDER.

Aye ! Time is needed. There's the pang—none sharper.

CALANUS.

Eternity alone from Time may free you :  
One step can lodge you in her realm unmoved :  
There from the palm eternal drops no scale :  
The ambrosial rose never lets fall a leaf :  
The ever-setting sun is never set :—  
That realm is Thought. My son, you have won your  
kingdom :  
Spurn it, and live.

ALEXANDER.

My task but half is finish'd  
Once wrought——

CALANUS.

You'd be a god on earth, and do  
What God has left undone. The world external  
To the end must be a world of blind confusions,  
Some little curb'd by little chiefs and kings,  
With others who in industries cognate  
Partake with these. Be still : the Eternal Patience  
Preserves that world the Eternal Thought creates.

ALEXANDER (*after a pause*).

How many are your lesser deities ?

CALANUS.

Their number's infinite. A finite number  
Would spawn us idols.

ALEXANDER.

They are less than Brahm ?

CALANUS.

Less than his priests, my son, of whom am I.  
Men know us not. Of old the patriarch Brahmins  
Sat in still groves : their flocks their kingdoms were ;  
For man was then a household, not a realm.  
When riot fill'd the earth, and lust, and war,  
These from the embraces of the race depraved  
Severed their sons. Apart they sat, revered  
Even by the vile. What man first was, we are :—  
The inferior castes fell from us.

[CRATERUS *enters.*]

ALEXANDER.

I must leave you.

CALANUS.

I claim your pledge. You're in my debt a pyre.

ALEXANDER.

What mean you ?

CALANUS.

King, you swear to speed me home :  
My body fails : my spirit's freedom nears me ;  
The God I serve rejects reluctant guests.  
Alive I mount that pyre : the finite atom  
Rejoins the infinite.

ALEXANDER.

A pride there is  
That dwarfs the pride of kings. Calanus, live !  
Your pupil, not your king, kneels to implore you.

CALANUS.

I have taught you nought.

CRATERUS.

I see it in his eye :  
His will is fix'd.

ALEXANDER (*rising*).

I'll have in this no part.  
Subdue that overweening will, Craterus ;  
Win him to live :—but still revere my pledge.  
[*Departs.*]

SCENE VI.—*A Terrace of the Queen-mother's Palace  
at Susa.*

ARSINOE, HEPHESTION.

---

ARSINOE.

You knew her : that is well.

HEPHESTION.

Who knew your mother  
Till death shall reverence woman's race. In her,  
Though doubly-dower'd, a mother and a queen,  
There lived a soft perpetual maidenhood,  
An inexperienced trust, timid, yet frank,  
Shy, yet through guilelessness forgetting shyness.  
She seem'd a flower-like creature come to fruit :  
She moved among her babes, an elder sister ;  
Then, waken'd by an infant cry or laugh,  
Full motherhood return'd.

ARSINOE.

Had you but known her  
In later days, and in her deeper woe !  
It nought embitter'd her. Flower-like you call'd her :  
She was a flower that sweeten'd with like breath  
The darkness and the day : she turn'd from none :

Her heart was liberal in accepting comfort  
Such as the least might minister. In griefs  
She died ; but not from grief.

HEPHESTION.

Her death it was  
That changed you first to grave? .

ARSINOE.

Not that alone ;  
The guidance of her orphans fell to me,  
And taught me soon my weakness. You, Hephestion,  
Have known severer labours, cares more stern ;  
Have won great battles ; captured mighty cities ;  
You—none but you—could knit those rival chiefs :—  
“ His weight of duties seem’d but weight of wings,”  
The king spake thus.

HEPHESTION.

His fortunes were the wind  
That raised those wings aloft.

ARSINOE.

You owe him much.

HEPHESTION.

You think so? Ha !

ARSINOË.

You loved him ; and you served him :  
What kindness equals this—to accept our aid ?  
What anguish bitterer than the aid rejected ?  
He told me of a fame so wide——

HEPHESTION.

I spurn it !  
To me 'twas little ever : now 'tis nought.

ARSINOË.

You praise him ; yet you will not I should praise him :  
I praise him ill in truth. The king was kind :  
He sent me oftentimes greetings. You sent none :—  
“ Children,” thus mused I, “ seem so soon forgotten.”

HEPHESTION.

I see a glare in the sky. What light is that ?

ARSINOË.

Our Persian moon, ascending, sends before her  
A splendour as of morn.

HEPHESTION.

The sun sets red :  
The heap'd clouds totter round his burning halls

Like inward-tumbling bulwarks of a city  
By flames of war consumed—by earthquake rock'd—  
Twin dooms !—I would——

ARSINOE.

Hephestion, look not on them :  
They fling upon your face a threatening light,  
Hiding that face I knew. Beside me stand :  
Watch we that moon. The West is like the past ;  
The East grows bright, for hers the eternal hope :  
We stand between these two. Your hand is hot :  
Your tasks consume you : pray you to remit them !  
My prayer will soon have won a bolder right :  
Your king, that knew not of my young ambition,  
Has crown'd it, as you know.

HEPHESTION.

The crown? You sought it !

ARSINOE.

To be your sister was that young ambition—  
One to a child so gentle, to a woman  
Must needs be gentler, sister of his wife,  
And wife of one far less his king than friend.  
You'll make me know him, teach me how to serve him,  
My censor, yet my brother.



HEPHESTION.

Oh my sister !

The ambitions of this world could ne'er be yours :—  
The doubt's not there. Arsinoe, are you happy?

ARSINOE.

Is happiness much worth ? I am at peace.

HEPHESTION.

Youth craves delight.

ARSINOE.

Not always. If in others  
The greediness for joy we deem ignoble,  
Almost immodest, what were it in me ?  
I am the daughter of a fallen house :  
My father died deserted and betray'd,  
Vanquish'd discrown'd, with none but foes for mourners :  
My mother—— Oh, Hephestion, sin it were  
In me to crave delight !

HEPHESTION.

Unceasing vigils,  
Unsparing labours, dangers, aye, and worse,  
Domestic treasons—these have been the lot  
Of him you wed. The immeasurable soul

That in him, sea-like swells to the light, sustains him :—  
The afflictions which he feels not for himself,  
You needs must feel and fear.

## ARSINOE.

Feel them I may :  
I know not if I ever fear'd ; I think  
I never shall. Fear not for me, Hephestion.  
Not wholly sorrows were the sorrows past :  
Those that must come will not be wholly sorrows.  
Oh, there's a sweetness spread o'er all the earth  
The trampling foot makes sweeter ! Stormiest clouds  
Sweep on, in splendour steep'd, to some strange music  
By us unheard. Hephestion, I can trust  
That Power who will not always keep His secret.  
The life He sends must needs, though sad, be great ;  
The death He sends be timely. Life is peace  
To those who live for duty. Peace more pure  
Will find us after death.

## HEPHESTION.

The moon is risen :  
I see it not, but see you in its light  
Like some young warrior, silver-mail'd and chaste ;  
Or liker yet to her, my childhood's wonder  
Great Artemis, as I saw her statue first

Against the broad full moon, while snows high heap'd  
Ridged her dark wintry porch. Farewell, Arsinoe !  
There was a mist that brooded on my spirit :  
That mist is raised. To you no ill can come  
That virtue will not change to its own essence :  
Your life, if long, will glorious prove, if short  
(I think you wish it such), revive in glory.  
The king will give you of his great, strong heart  
What he can spare to woman, and revere  
More than he loves. Your Faith he honour'd once :  
Would it were his !

ARSINOE.

I think that will not be.

HEPHESTION.

My tasks are heavy now : until this marriage  
We meet not oft.

ARSINOE.

See you that grove, Hephestion,  
Still dark, yet glistening in the ascended moon ?  
A grave lies there that covers one you knew.  
She was my friend. To hers my heart was held  
So oft in watches of the long, sweet night,  
And couch partaken, that a part thereof  
Went down with her into that grave. One day

Beside that spot we spake : she died soon after.  
She sent to you a message. By that grave  
The eve before this bridal we will sit.  
Something I'll tell you of her ; but not much ;  
Show you a book of Persian songs that pleased her ;  
And haply read you one. Till then farewell.

---

SCENE VII.—*Susa. The Gate of the Bridal Pavilion.*

*A crowd of Greeks and Asiatics.*

---

A GREEK SOLDIER.

Push on, spiritual Magian ! Would thou wert pure  
spirit : so should I push through thee !

SECOND GREEK SOLDIER.

The king hath spent the revenue of Persia for two  
years in discharging of his soldiers' debts. At first we  
Greeks would not send in our names, for a rumour  
there was that the king had a design to incorporate the  
Barbarians with Greeks in the ranks. We are no  
dullards. Then the king gave command to spread gold  
heaps on tables throughout the camp, and paid off all  
debts without registration of names.

## A BACTRIAN.

Fie upon you, Greeks! Ye can neither trust nor be trusted. For one of you that leaps into the pit, there be three that lose all out of over wariness. Greeks new as bubbles are mated with Persian princesses! Back, soldiers! back, guards! make way for them that bear on their heads the cooling drinks!

## SECOND GREEK SOLDIER.

I crept into the hall and beheld thè glory. It is three stadia in length within, and swathed in purple. The pillars are sixty feet high, plated with gold; and between them are tables. Our generals wore crowns higher than those of Asian kings. By Hephestion walked Drypetis, sister of Arsinoë; by Perdiccas the daughter of Atropates; by Ptolemy and Eumenes the two daughters of Artabazus; and by Nearchus the daughter of old Mentor. There were a hundred generals mated, and ten thousand soldiers besides.

## THIRD GREEK SOLDIER.

I saw, outside, more than all thou saw'st within; and that was the good and useful kicking bestowed upon Phylax! His face was as though he had swallowed his own ratsbane. Hephestion had passed into the hall; and they that attended him, as if by urgency of the crowd,

pressed on the doctor. Hephestion is the bravest of all our generals, and the most loving to boot, and he looks ruddier than he hath looked of late. For three weeks past his step has been less buoyant than once, and fever-quicken'd at times.

A PERSIAN BARBER.

Good woman, my wife, answer me this, if washing for the Greeks hath made thee a philosopher: what profit shall fall to us poor folk from all this royal marrying and junketing?

BARBER'S WIFE.

Tush, thou foolish man! know'st thou not that ere three days are past the price of unguents—yea, and of bread—will have fallen to one half?

THE SENTINELS.

Back from the gates! A passage!

*[The chief generals walk out in procession, wearing crowns.]*

SELEUCUS.

A sight for gods! That last libation paid,  
Each feaster lifting still his hand, on the sudden  
A sunbeam smote along the golden cups,

Till half the chamber flash'd from end to end  
Like the sun's path o'er sea !

PTOLEMY.

Far things I saw not :

My place was on the dais, near the queen.  
The strong eye of the king made inquest ever,  
As when ere fight it roams the battle-field,  
Around the hall. Courteous and kind, though grave,  
Hephestion reassured a startled bride,  
And on a face, whose smiles with tears were spangled,  
Made light at last prevail. She sat at first  
Heart-wilder'd—yet amused ; her roe-like eyes  
The darker for the paleness of her cheeks  
And garland-shaded brows. The feast not over,  
Peace came to her through trust in him close by :  
Wife-love had made a seven years' growth.

SELEUCUS.

Arsinoe ?

PTOLEMY.

Nor startled she, nor pensive, glad or sad :  
She look'd like one who, some deep chasm o'er-pass'd,  
Sits thenceforth safe ; who—all things sacrificed—  
Within their monumental urn retains them,

Securer for that funeral prison cold,  
Or else in some far hope.

(*A cry, "Way for the king !"*)

[ALEXANDER *issues forth, attended by  
generals and Asian princes. The  
Persians kneel as he passes : the  
Greeks stand.*]

ALEXANDER.

Rejoice, ye men of Macedon and Persia :  
Two realms this day are join'd as body and soul :—  
Craterus, where's Calanus ?

CRATERUS.

Sir, he's dead.

He sent for me last eve, at set of sun,  
Demanding swift fulfilment of your pledge,  
Or else you were foresworn. Ere rose the day,  
On whose white brow I wish'd no shade to fall,  
The pyre completed stood ; but he who claim'd it  
Refused to issue from his cloud of thought  
Till noon had come.

ALEXANDER.

I mark'd a smoke at noon,  
Susa in sight, upon my homeward way :—  
Relate the order of your grim proceeding.



## CRATERUS.

The rites were his of Indian death when proudest.  
First in the death-procession moved a horse  
Snow-white, of breed Nysæan ; next, slave-borne,  
The jewell'd vases, and the robes, your gifts ;  
Calanus, in his litter, last, flower-crown'd,  
His old white head clear shining in the sun,  
And chaunting hymns. King-like the man dispersed,  
The pyre attain'd, your gifts among his friends,  
And bade them with a cheerful face and strong  
Rejoice till night. Serene, he clomb the pyre ;  
In the host's sight he waved his hand—then sank.  
Sharp shrill'd the elephants ; the trumpets peal'd ;  
The flames rush'd up. We saw that hand no more.

## ALEXANDER.

He bade me no farewell

## CRATERUS.

Your pardon, sir :  
His last was this :—"Commend me to the king :  
Tell him we meet once more at Babylon."

## ALEXANDER.

Ill day he chose ; and spleenful his departure :  
A man should lack not manners in his death.

His parting words excuse him : he was mad :  
“ At Babylon ”—he’s dead, and ne’er will see it ;  
Nor I, who live. I ever hated ruins.

---

SCENE VIII.—*Opis, on the Tygris.*

*Large bodies of soldiers assembled before a platform  
occupied by ALEXANDER’S Generals.*

---

FIRST SOLDIER.

Would that Alexander were taller ; so should we have  
a sight of him ! The Scythian ambassadors showed  
their discretion when they wondered. They looked to  
see a reasonably-sized giant.

AN OFFICER.

Who gave thee leave, sirrah, to see that the king is not  
tall ?

SECOND SOLDIER.

He that is a Greek, let him be wary as a Greek this  
day ! There is a design, and it is bad. The king is  
good : therefore it was Craterus that moved him.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Nay, Craterus is honest, and loves soldiers worn in the  
wars.

## SECOND SOLDIER.

Craterus is honest : therefore it was Antigonus that deceived the king. He shall bleed for it. We let pass the Persian pomps and the shame of the cavalry ; but if Barbarians be equalled with us in the infantry, better it were that all the Greeks were drowned in one day ! Three years since, when the king promised equality to the Barbarians, we Greeks inwardly believed that he spake in craft. This can be proved upon oath. Therefore, if he keepeth his promise, he deceiveth his friends and fawneth on his foes. But for these new-married we should all be of one mind.

## FIRST SOLDIER.

The Persians be all liars ! They pretend that they are not equalled with us Greeks. They are equalled but for their own bad heart. Let them worship the gods, and not grovel in their idolatry of fire ! What hindereth piety but a bad heart ? Therefore, if a bad Persian be made equal to a good Greek, the Greeks have a manifest wrong. Besides, if the many be equalled with the few, the few shall be drowned in the many. The Phalanx grins, the Hypaspists growl, the Escort knows itself doomed. Papers have been found scattered abroad :— here is one that lay near the tent of old Phylax : “ Sleep

ye, O ye Greeks, or be ye awake? There was one that watched for the army—Philotas." All night long, in our encampments, thirteen men lectured us of our wrongs, and twelve times the army gave acclamations.

A MEDE.

Silence is stronger than acclamations.

SOLDIERS.

Eavesdropper, who sent thee hither? Take that !  
[*Striking their daggers through him.*] To spite us the more he died in silence. The gods be pitiful to all poor dumb beasts !

[*A cry, " Push forward, the king has arrived."*]

ALEXANDER.

Ye sons of Macedon and Greece, attend:  
'Tis rumour'd there are still among you debtors :  
A debtor is a slave : who serves his king  
Must serve in freedom. I discharge those debts.

A MUTINEER.

He must not be suffer'd to speak.

ALEXANDER.

You are mostly strong ; but some are men in years,  
War-wearied and outworn. Would any homeward ?

At home they shall not sit abjects in age,  
But largess-laden say to those that praise them,  
"The ranks wherein our glorying manhood toil'd  
To all are open."

A RINGLEADER OF THE MUTINEERS.

Are open, he means, to Persians! He the son of  
Zeus! Lift up them that shall speak for you!

*[Thirteen ringleaders are lifted up on the  
shoulders of the crowd, and wave standards.  
A cry is raised on all sides, "Send us all  
home, since you need us no longer. Go  
to war with none to help you save Zeus,  
your father!"]*

PTOLEMY (to ALEXANDER).

They'll turn on you, like hounds upon the huntsman!

*[ALEXANDER leaps down among the crowd,  
followed by his Generals. They seize the  
thirteen ringleaders, and drag them up the  
steps of the platform.]*

ALEXANDER.

Speed! To this headless rabble give their heads!

*[The Generals fling the heads of the  
ringleaders among the mutineers.]*

Stand back ! I go alone : let none attend me.

[ALEXANDER takes his stand on a low part of  
the platform, level with the heads of the  
crowd.]

ALEXANDER.

Ye swine-herds, and ye goat-herds, and ye shepherds,  
That shamelessly in warlike garb usurp'd  
Your vileness cloak, my words are not for you ;  
There stand among you others, soldiers' sons,  
Male breasts, o'er-writ with chronicles of wars,  
To them I speak. What made you that ye are,  
The world's wide wonder, and the dread of nations ?  
Your king ! What king ? Some king that ruled o'er  
lands

Illimitable, and golden-harvested

From ocean's rim to ocean ? Sirs, 'twas one  
With petty realm, foe-girt and cleft with treasons,  
Dragg'd up from darkness late, and half alive.  
From these beginnings I subdued the earth :—  
For whom ? For you. The increase is yours : for me,  
Whose forehead sweated, and whose eyes kept watch,  
Remains the barren crown and power imperial.  
I found but seventy talents in my chest :  
Full many a soldier with his bride late-spoused,  
Gat better dowry. In my ports I found

A fleet to Persia's but as one to ten ;  
I sold my royal farms, and built me ships ;  
An army found thin-worn as winter wolves  
On Rhodope snow-piled ; my sceptre's gems  
I changed to bread, and fed it. Forth from nothing  
I call'd that empire which this day I rule.  
My father left me this—his Name : I took it  
And kneaded in the hollows of my hands :  
I moulded it to substance, nerved it, boned it  
With victories, breathed through it my spirit, its life,  
Clothed it with vanquish'd nations, sent it forth  
Sworded with justice and with wisdom helm'd,  
The one just empire of a world made one.  
Forget ye, sirs, the things ye saw—the States  
Redeem'd of Lesser Asia, our own blood,  
The States subdued, first Syria, then Phoenicia,  
Old Tyre, the war-wing'd tigress of the seas,  
And Egypt next ? The Pyramids broad-based  
Descrying far our advent rock'd for fear  
Above their buried kings : Assyria bow'd :  
The realm of Ninus fought upon her knees  
Not long : the realm of Cyrus kiss'd the dust :  
From lost Granicus rang the vanquish'd wail  
To Issus : on Arbela's plain it died.  
Chaldæa, Persis, Media, Susiana—  
We stepp'd above these corpses in our right

To Parthia, and Hyrcania, Bactriana,  
And Scythia's endless waste—  
The cry from Paromisis answer gave—  
To Drangiana's dirge : thy doom, Aria,  
To wan-faced Acherisia spake her own :  
In vain the Indian Caucasus hurl'd down  
From heaven-topp'd crags her floods to bar my way :  
Flood-like we dash'd on vales till then but known  
To gods, not men, of Greece. Bear witness, ye  
Aornus, from thine eagle-baffling crest  
(Vainly by Hercules himself assail'd),  
By us down-pluck'd, and Nysa, Bacchus-built,  
When Bacchus trod the East. What hands were those  
Which from the grove Nysæan and fissured rocks  
The Bacchic ivies rent? Whose foreheads wore them?  
Whose lips upraised the Bacchus-praising hymn?  
Whose hands consummated his work—restored  
To liberty and laws the god-built city?—  
Sirs, the vile end of all is briefly told.  
We pierced the precinct of the Rivers Five,  
Indus, and other four. The jewell'd crowns  
Of those dusk sovereigns fell flat before us :  
The innumerable armies open'd like the wind  
That sighs around an arrow, while we pass'd :  
Those moving mountains, the broad elephants,  
Went down with all their towers. We reach'd Hydaspes :



Nations, the horizon blackening, o'er it hung :—  
Porus, exult ! In ruin thine were true ;  
While mine, in conquest's hour, upon the banks  
Of Hyphasis—What stay'd me on my way ?  
An idiot army in mid victory dumb !  
I gave them time—three days : those three days past,  
Ye heard a voice, "The gods forbid our march :"—  
Sirs, 'twas a falsehood ! On the Olympian height  
That day the immortal concourse crouch'd for shame :  
Their oracles were dead. 'Twas I that spake it !  
I was, that hour, the Olympian height twelve-throned  
That hid the happy auspice in the cloud,  
And this mine oracle—"Of those dumb traitors  
Not one shall wash his foot in Ganges' wave."  
I built twelve altars on that margin, each  
A temple's height, and eastward fronting :—why ?  
To lift my witness 'gainst you to the gods !  
Once more, as then, I spurn you, slaves ! Your place  
Is vacant. Time shall judge this base desertion  
Which leaves me but the conquer'd to complete  
The circle of my conquests. Gods, it may be,  
Shall vouch it holy, men confirm it just ;—  
Your places in the ranks are yours no more.

[ALEXANDER *départs*, attended by his Generals.]

FIRST MUTINEER.

We are out of the ranks.

SECOND MUTINEER.

He will conquer the rest of the world with the Persians.  
He will give unto Persians the title of kinsmen, and the  
privilege of the kiss.

THIRD MUTINEER.

We must throng unto the palace and throw down our  
arms : we must kneel in the courts day by day, and lie  
before the gates. He will come out, and forgive us, and  
lead us with him to Ecbatana.

FOURTH MUTINEER.

As for those thirteen, it is certain they died very justly,  
since they deceived the army.

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SCENE IX.—*Ecbatana. The House of Phylax.*

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PHYLAX (*to his page*).

Sirrah, attend ! The king hath arrived newly from  
Opis, and this day maketh a discourse in the great  
temple. I am lame yet, and go not forth. Report unto  
me that which he delivereth. Spy out likewise where  
lodgeth Hephestion. [*The page departs.*] The hatreds  
that I sowed have but lifted the king to higher greatness.

SCENE XI.—*The Great Temple at Ecbatana.*

ALEXANDER, *his Generals, and the Magnates of his Empire,  
Greek and Asiatic.*

---

ALEXANDER.

I greet you, lords of every race alike  
And every nation, join'd henceforth in one :  
Well meet we in old Media's mother-city,  
And fair the omen. Lords, that doubt which dogg'd  
My steps, extinguish'd with revolt extinguish'd,  
My fortunes touch at last their zenith height  
And sail among the stars. Remains the future.  
'Tis rumour'd that my face is toward the West :  
There's time enough for that. Limit and Term  
Govern the world. Completion of my work  
Here in the orient inchoate needs ten years,  
Which past will leave me still a man in prime.  
India of Ganges yet remains to conquer :  
We have still to stud with western colonies  
Our eastern realms, and light with Grecian schools,  
To link our Indian and our Persian thrones  
By politic commerce. Lords, I have given command  
To free insulted Tygris from her dykes,  
Bequest of kings who commerce fear'd and freedom.  
I have sent Nearchus to the Arabian coasts

To burn the pirates' ships and drown their crews.  
Indus shall wed Euphrates, devious thence  
Shall brim Orontes, and make broad Ilissus.  
We touch at Greece : thither Craterus speeds.  
Antipater, that ruled in Macedon,  
Shall yield him place, and here reply to charges  
That touch both fame and life. I smiled to hear  
That, militant against our Persian pomps,  
He wears plain raiment with a border white,  
At banquet seated, or on judgment-throne :  
His purple is within ! I trust 'tis false  
He traffics with the Ætolians : trust 'tis falser  
That when, by sentence of the assembled host,  
The long time nameless ruler of this city,  
Who fill'd of old yon seat, now vacant, died,  
He said, " Parmenio false ! then who is true ?  
Parmenio falsely slain ! then who is safe ? "  
These things I nought prejudge. To weightier matters.  
Two great decrees this day we send to Greece :  
The first, amid the Olympian games proclaim'd,  
Shall spread a general gladness. It remands  
All exiled citizens to their ancient homes,  
Save those for sacrilege or murder mulct,  
And gives us friends in every Grecian city.  
The last demands for me that titular meed  
Which, not alone on offspring of the gods,

But likewise upon mortals well-deserving,  
Though wanting Death's immortalizing touch,  
Mankind with joy confers—honours divine.  
Lords, ere this council separates— [*turning to Perdicas*]  
Where's Hephestion ?

PERDICCAS.

Hephestion, sir, is slightly fever-touch'd,  
And keeps his house.

ALEXANDER.

Command that Phylax tend him.  
Hephestion's much for peace, and will'd this day  
In speech to praise it : that shall serve to-morrow :  
Till then my further purpose I withhold.  
This day the Feast of Dionysus rules:  
He play'd me false the night that Cleitus died  
(The rites of the Dioscuri his supplanting),  
But kings remember benefits alone :—  
At Thebes, his chiefest seat, I did him wrong :  
I do repent that slaughter. Lords, farewell !

---

SCENE XI.—*Ecbatana.*

PHYLAX *and his PAGE.*

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THE PAGE.

I heard all. The king made a gladsome speech, and showed that now at last his fortune had topped the summit, and sailed away among the stars. There shall be wars no more; but here he will abide in glory and feasting for ever and ever. Hephestion is sick in the lesser palace; and this missive commandeth that thou shalt raise him up, and make him a sound man by eleven o'clock to-morrow; for he must exhort the council at noon.

PHYLAX.

It is well: depart! [*The page retires.*] The gods are turned cynic, and will have Jest to rule! My master, Diogenes, is dead, and is carried to Olympus: his sign is the Constellation of the Tub, and he raineth influence upon earth. Many a month have I lain in wait for Hephestion, and now the king putteth him into my hand! Now also the Alexandrian star is at its highest! I were an infidel if I recognized not the omen. A fresh wind bloweth in from the garden. Red rose, thou blushest unto me! White lily, thou curtsiest unto me!

Thais of the Feast and Phryne of the Bath, I scorn you alike ! These sealed packets hold minerals more mastering than ever built up woman-bones. Here is "courage by the ounce," and there is "needful flight." This is "jealousy ;" and here is—I have found it at last—" *long silence.*" I could label these heart-quellers with heavenly names ; but it sufficeth. Hephestion, if thou meetest Philotas in the shades, salute him from me !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Road to Babylon.*

ALEXANDER *and his Generals.*    *In the rear ride*  
PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, EUMENES, *and* ANTIGONUS.

---

PTOLEMY.

Sirs, be ye wary in your homeward letters,  
The Greeks are reverential of the gods :  
The fane of Esculapius razed to earth  
In vengeance for Hephestion's death, may move them.

EUMENES.

Ulysses, keenest-witted of man's race,  
Made boast, "No Greek with hand so large as mine  
Has paid the gods their dues."

ANTIGONUS.

The Medes are wroth :  
Their mules and horses shorn, they deem'd the rite



The obsequious tribute of a royal mourning :  
When from their city walls the summit fell  
The rite was new : they frown'd.

PTOLEMY.

So frown'd the Persians  
Their "Quenchless Fire" extinguish'd.

SELEUCUS.

Let them frown !

When that mute tent roll'd forth its thunder-peals,  
I drew my breath. I said, "The king will live."

PTOLEMY.

There lives no Greek that wept not for Hephestion :  
Men say, "The army's strength remains : its youth—  
The beauty of the battle—victory's gladness—  
These, these are dead." 'Twas not his words or deeds :  
For this they loved him—that the good in each  
Flower'd in his presence, making sweet the soul.

SELEUCUS.

His cavalry shall bear his name for ever :  
Henceforth who rules it as his vicar rules,  
Arm'd with his ring. His sister-tended bride  
Delights her sad sick-bed with his last words,

" My faithful, true, and honourable wife : "  
If any happy lived, and timely died,  
It is the man we miss.

EUMENES.

He, too, died timely—  
Phylax—the king struck never wholesomer stroke !  
The soldiers grudged him burial ; for which cause  
The four-legg'd cynics of his sect interr'd him.

SELEUCUS.

The woods are pass'd : there stands the imperial city !  
The tower ; the palace-front ; the hanging-gardens ;  
The cliff-like walls unending !

EUMENES.

A procession !

[*A sacerdotal procession advances.*]

CHALDÆAN PRIEST (*kneeling to ALEXANDER*).

Berosus, and the priesthood of Chaldæa  
In us, dread sovereign, at your feet—

ALEXANDER.

Speak on.

## CHALDÆAN PRIEST.

Since first that royal face made bright our world :  
Since first that royal voice sent forth command  
To raise once more the temple of great Belus,

[*The other priests cry out :*

“ At Persia’s cost ! at hated Persia’s cost.”

CHALDÆAN PRIEST *continues.*

High as it stood ere marr’d by Xerxes’ crime,  
Our prayer was this, to welcome earth’s supreme  
To Babylon, his seat. Vain hopes of man !  
The omens ill presage !

## ALEXANDER.

The worse for them !

## CHALDÆAN PRIEST.

Approach not Babylon, at least, with brow  
Dusk from the westward sky ! The circuit make  
Of gate and wall : and enter, face to east !

## ALEXANDER.

What thinks of omens Ptolemy, our wisest ?

PTOLEMY.

Sir, than the sceptics I am sceptic more :  
They scoff to boast their wit : I scoff at them.  
Sir, Reason rules but in her own domain,  
Beyond whose limits just, her " Yea " and " Nay "  
I hold for equal weights in equal scales  
'That rest in poise. Of things beyond the sense,  
As spirits, ghosts, auguries, and mystic warnings,  
Reason says nought : their sphere and ours are diverse :  
We know not if at points they intersect ;  
If—casual, or by laws—their inmates touch.  
Our world's a part, and not a whole : its surface  
We pierce at points : the depth remains unknown.  
Sir, in these labyrinths there be phrenzies twain,  
Unreasoning each, whereof the proudest errs  
From Reason's path most far.

ALEXANDER.

Reason but walks  
Secure in foot-prints of Experience old,  
Whose testimony is diversely reported.

PTOLEMY.

The affirmative experience is strong ;  
The negative is nought, and breeds us nothing.

ALEXANDER.

What help remains where Reason speaks not?

PTOLEMY.

Instinct :

And as material instincts plainlier show  
In bird and beast than man, so spiritual instincts  
Speak plainlier haply through the popular voice  
Than censure of the wise.

ALEXANDER.

The people trust them :

To ignore such things they count as ignorance simply :  
To spurn them were to chill the popular heart  
In the hour of need. I make the city's circuit,  
And enter it at morn—What ho ! a herald !  
And pale with haste !

MESSENGER (*arriving*).

The river's banks have burst,  
The harvest's lost ; uncounted herds are drown'd,  
And westward of the city all is flood :—  
All entrance there is barr'd.

ALEXANDER.

So ends the doubt :

Forward ! The shortest road is ever best.

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SCENE II.—*Palace Terrace at Babylon.*

PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, EUMENES, CASSANDER.

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EUMENES.

You shall do wisely, sir, not 'angering him :  
The king is triply alter'd since you saw him :  
Antipater, your father, this should know ;  
He is sad, and stern, and proud.

CASSANDER.

My father's honour  
Is sacred as your king's. Year following year,  
Olympias, haughtiest of her sex, and subtlest,  
Scorning an equal, hating a superior,  
Warr'd on his worth. He deign'd her no reply :  
He kept his charge, old Macedon, in peace :  
Yearly he sent his king recruits, and ever  
Held his firm foot upon revolted Greece.  
He's strong in truth.

PTOLEMY.

The king can bear all truth ;  
Yet trusts not truth when braggart. This remember ;  
Be ceremonious when you see him first :  
Hating these poms, those too he hates that grudge them.

SELEUCUS.

Hephestion's death some whit disturb'd the king :  
The obsequies complete, he brightens daily :  
Would you had seen the pyre !

PTOLEMY.

Describe that pyre :  
It was grief's madness—yet its beauty too.

SELEUCUS.

Sir, 'twas a work of nations in a month :  
A mile of Babylon's huge wall went down  
To fashion forth its base : the cost thereof  
Had ten times built the Athenian Parthenon :  
'Twas earth's supremest structure, seen, and lost.  
Forests down-fell'd sent forth its colonnades,  
Huge pines, that, range o'er range to heaven ascending,  
Forgot not yet the sighing winds, their friends  
Known on their native hills. In silver robes  
Those far-retiring columns shone, sun-touch'd,  
Tier above tier ; the level spaces 'twixt them  
Gold-zoned in circling cornices distinct  
With sculptured frieze Titanic—giant wars,  
The strength upheaved of earth assailing heaven  
Kept down by over-hanging weight of gods.

Seen 'gainst the blue, were Syren shapes that lured  
The seeming mariner to death ; with these,  
White groups of sea-nymphs weeping round a wreck :  
So fine the art, half Asian and half Greek,  
That, from their wreathèd conchs and shells unwinding,  
The tube-enthralled zephyrs breathed around  
Such strains as sailors hear on haunted shores :—  
Far off the song was sweetest, saddest near.

EUMENES.

To me 'twas marvellous most by night.

SELEUCUS.

The stars

Died out : the purple vault deepen'd to black  
Above that lower firmament of lights  
Which seem'd a heaven more festive, neater earth,  
A many-shining city of the gods.  
All night the wind increased, till that strange music  
Swell'd to a dirge so deep that some who heard  
Went mad, they say, and died.

EUMENES.

When midnight came

The king gave word. The omnipresent fire



Leap'd to mid heaven. The pack'd horizon show'd  
As though the innumerable glebe had turn'd to man ;  
And each face pale as death !

PTOLEMY.

You have seen the site :  
'Twill need the gales of many a stormy winter  
Those ashes to disperse.

CASSANDER.

Knee-deep—chest-deep,  
My horse stagger'd among them. Grievings like these  
Tread out our lesser woes. The king would teach us  
The transience of man's greatness and his joy :  
Now know I why he built of wood, not stone :  
He built us up a lesson.

EUMENES.

What ? that grief  
Is transient likewise ?

CASSANDER.

Nay, I meant not that.

PTOLEMY.

He taught a nobler lesson. Has he learn'd it ?

*Alexander the Great.*

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SCENE III.—*Hall of the Palace at Babylon.*

ALEXANDER *on his throne surrounded by his Generals.*  
*The nobles of Babylon and the neighbouring provinces are*  
*ranged round the hall.*

---

ALEXANDER.

I have had enough of councils. We'll be brief :  
The Grecian embassies shall take precedence  
In the order of their temples' dignity,  
First Elis, Delphi second, Corinth third.  
Whence come the others ?

EUMENES.

Sire, from Carthage one ;  
She sinn'd with Tyre : from states Italian, four,  
The Bruttians, the Lucanians, the Tyrrhenians,  
And that new city, Rome.

ALEXANDER.

A bandit's den !  
Its earliest citizens were robber tribes ;  
And, faithful to their past, they are leagued this day  
With Antium's pirates. Drive them home ! One day  
They'll know a Grecian heel. To the work in hand.

Princes of long dejected Babylon  
That yearly bent her brow more near the ground,  
Rejoice ! her days of mourning are gone by.  
The earliest seat of Empire claims its rights :  
The on-flowing tide of power, 'gainst nature's law  
Remounting, finds its fount. A conqueror's hand,  
Forgetting this, that victory should be just,  
Was heavy on your nation, sirs, of old,  
Grudged you your great Euphrates, sluiced it hence,  
Dried up its city-channel : I restore it.  
I have dug for you a harbour : Indian fleets  
Therein shall sway their masts with lighter crafts  
Freighted from Egypt, and our Grecian Isles,  
With help of broad canals from Syrian shores  
By Grecian science plann'd, by Asian gold  
'Mid deserts excavated. Yestereve  
Your eyes beheld a pledge of this high future,  
The meeting of two fleets, from India one,  
The other, recent from Ægean waves,  
Dragg'd overland to Thapsacus, and thence  
Launch'd on Euphrates' wave. Assyrian lords,  
Your Babylon among her meads shall sit  
An inland Tyre, secure : your ancient temple  
Revindicate its state. He nothing err'd  
Who fix'd of old in Babylon the seat  
Of eastern Empire. Round her throne shall stand

Persepolis, Susa, and Ecbatana,  
Handmaids, not rivals. In the West, with her  
Shall Alexandria share.

[*Acclamations from all sides* : "It is the gift of  
a god," *during which CASSANDER enters the  
hall. He approaches the king, but without  
making the customary "Adoration."*]

ALEXANDER.

Who's he that enters like the forest beast  
Irreverent, and unshamed? Remove the man.

[*CASSANDER is forcibly removed.*]

The rest is brief. My purpose was—men knew it—  
To spend ten years consolidating in peace  
The eastern world. That purpose I have changed :  
The years are ill to trust : presuming death  
Strikes down the loftiest as the lowliest head,  
Rendering no count. Westward I turn my face,  
Which with the East, through subjugation raised  
(Since to be wisely ruled alone is freedom)  
Shall make my Empire one. Two mighty armies  
Divide the triumph. Southward, one shall coast  
The midland sea through Egypt to Cyrene  
And on through Lybia to the Atlantic deep,  
Northward the other, from Illyria's shore  
To far Iberia's verge. From you I need

Full fifty thousand soldiers in three months :  
Your bravest. To subdue the West, and mould it,  
Demands three years : for these the queen is regent,  
Not more among my captains to rebate  
Envy's fell tooth, than in requital just  
Of royal qualities in her discovered.  
Enough. Call in those Grecian embassies.

*[First enter the ENVOYS from the Greeks  
assembled at the Olympic games : they  
speak :—*

King, and our lord, the Greeks with reverence heard,  
Though not without misgiving, that decree  
Remanding to their homes all Grecian exiles——

ALEXANDER.

Does Greece accept that ordinance ?

ENVOYS (*with hesitation*).

Greece accepts.

*[Next, ambassadors from all the Greek States  
enter, habited like heralds deputed with  
offerings to temples. They advance to  
ALEXANDER with golden crowns, and kneel-  
ing, lay them at his feet, saying :—*

To Alexander, Philip's conquering son,  
The States of Greece unanimous concede  
Honours divine, and hail him as a god.

SCENE IV.—*Hanging-Gardens at Babylon.*

PTOLEMY, *the Magian* ASTAR.

---

ASTAR.

War with the West ! Your king has changed his purpose.

PTOLEMY.

Sharp grief has changed it. Grief, that should be gentle,  
To him is storm. Fiercely it bears him on  
Through Action's angriest skies.

ASTAR.

The king is strong :  
His eye is as bright and keen, but glad no more :  
That iron Will still clutches its Hephestion.

PTOLEMY.

The tyranny of love outlives its use.  
He loves Hephestion as of old. Not less  
His friend's benigner power—to that he's false.  
Hephestion was for peace : the royal mind  
Broods but on wars.

ASTAR.

His household life is past :  
His Persian wife, the sweetest of all ladies,

And lordliest-soul'd, her widow'd sister tends  
Far off. He'd have it so.

PTOLEMY.

Ten years he destined  
To moulding of the East——

ASTAR.

Ten years ! Great Persia  
A hundred spent, knitting her realm in one :  
Still lived the spirit of Cyrus in her kings :  
Cold airs from Median hills made strong their arm :  
Our Magian sages—we too are from Media—  
Order'd alike religion and the state :  
Our nobles then were frugal, just, severe ;  
They never shunn'd a foe, nor fear'd the truth :  
We conquer'd Asia's western half, and Egypt :  
Her idols knew it. But for Marathon——

PTOLEMY.

I thought you of a temper more sedate :  
With us philosophy laughs passion down.

ASTAR.

Sir, truth that lives not militant on earth  
Traffics with falsehood in complicity,  
More false in this :—it sins against the light.  
Our Faith was warlike while a heart was in it :

So long we conquer'd. But a vanquish'd race  
Has this revenge, its direst, and its last :—  
With poison of its vices it infects  
At last its conqueror's blood. 'Twas so with us.  
Then temples first confined our boundless worship ;  
Then first with Oromasdes Zeus had part ;  
Then first was weakness deem'd a kingdom's wisdom,  
Promiscuous tolerance her maternal love ;—  
I say they lied. 'Tis not a mother's arms  
That open are at all times, and to all.

PTOLEMY.

Themes speculative these that end in heats :  
Our king, you see, moves onward.

ASTAR.

Greek, you err !

I say his course is retrograde, not onward.  
This city's Babylon !

PTOLEMY.

What then ?

ASTAR.

The seat

Of earth's first empire :—fleshly 'twas, and base :  
Its gods were idols viler far than Egypt's,  
For hers conceal'd a meaning. Our great Xerxes



The pride abated of their brick-built tower ;  
Your king rebuilds it, fawns on Babylon,  
A demon-haunted ruin would restore :  
I've heard him laud Semiramis herself :—  
He heir of Cyrus !

PTOLEMY.

Persian, have a care !  
You need our king.

ASTAR.

Greek ! I have ne'er denied it :  
Ah, would I might ! A realm's not wholly fallen  
Till this, the last dishonour, it has reach'd,  
To need its conqueror. This marriage blends us :  
I, that abhorr'd it, 'gainst it never work'd ;  
These hands were press'd upon that contract's seal.  
The effect ? Look forth from these o'er-hanging gardens !  
Far down, a long procession walks of priests :  
Who are they ? Magians ? Greeks ? Not so ! Chaldæans !  
They hymn your king !

PTOLEMY.

He loves not slaves : o'er earth  
He wills to build one Greece.

· ASTAR.

Her kingdom's Thought :

And penance she must do ere yet 'tis won :

He drowns his Greece in gold: he mocks with honours:

A Greece he breeds to undo the work of Greece

In her true day. He'll raise a pigmy race

To mock dead Titans. From the highway dust

He'll quicken with corruption's base conception

Sophists in swarm. The locust-cloud will spread,

And herbless leave the world.

PTOLEMY.

Your augury's ill :

The mind of Greece——

ASTAR.

The heart of Greece is rotten !

That soil, where grows in darkness intellect's root :

'Twas false to heaven ; and now, malicious grown,

Is false to nature. At their feasts I've heard them,

Sin's hideous jest—the dialectic leprous !

I raised my head at last, and answer'd thus——

Nations have vanish'd 'neath a conqueror's tread ;

Nations have perish'd, worn by civil strife ;

Nations have wither'd, famine-plagued : but Greece.

The beautiful, the wise, the once heroic,

A suicide shall die nor leave a child

To inearth the barren corpse.

SCENE V.—*The Lake of Pallacopas, near Babylon.*

ALEXANDER *in the Royal Barge, attended by* ARTABAZUS,  
SELEUCUS, ANTIGONUS, PEUCESTAS, *and others.*

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ALEXANDER.

Ten thousand men at break of day, Peucestas !  
The spot is there ! we'll cut through yonder rock ;  
O'er-proud Euphrates there shall find a channel—  
To work ere noon !

PEUCESTAS.

It shall be order'd, sir.

SELEUCUS.

A mystery of sadness girds this region :  
Those trackless wastes, half water and half land,  
Those low-hung, hueless clouds above them streaming,  
The piping of the willow-bending wind,  
Upon the horizon far yon city-wall—  
Some curse is on this spot !

ALEXANDER.

Misrule's that curse :  
In ignorant kindness noxious as in hate :  
The country drown'd, the city drain'd of waters—

Old Xerxes did his work ! Look well around :  
We need a fortress next, wherein to entrench  
The warders of our strait. I see a crag :  
Steer to its base.

ARTABAZUS.

A tomb it is of kings.

ALEXANDER.

Those slaves whom late we pass'd knee-deep in water,  
With blood-shot eyes half blinded by the glare  
And light thin frames, were not of stock Chaldaean :  
Whence came they ?

ARTABAZUS.

Sire, from Hierosolyma :

The Assyrian razed their city, burn'd their Temple,  
To exile dragg'd them—grey-beards, women, babes :  
In fifty years the Assyrian's empire fell :  
Cyrus, the Persian, loved that Hebrew people  
And loosed them from their bonds. Some few remain'd :  
Their progeny are those you mark'd but now.

ALEXANDER.

A vision rose before me as I watch'd them :  
I too have stood in Hierosolyma :

My purpose was to look on it once more :  
Some chance, or humour, on my way from Egypt  
(Near it I march'd) made hindrance, and I pass'd.

## ARTABAZUS.

Sir, to that people you have kindness shown :  
They are ever ill at ease. Their ancient Law  
Forbade their task—rebuilding Belus' temple :—  
'Tis six leagues off, yet there it rises plain :—  
Your clemency vouchsafed a licit toil :  
They deepen yonder channel.

## ALEXANDER.

Better thus.

The Persians scorn the Assyrians, they, the Hebrews ;  
Between the rival races, and their gods,  
I hold the balance just. What strain is that ?  
The Persian and the Babylonian barges  
Since morn have follow'd mine with hymn, or chaunt :  
This has a different note.

## THE SONG.

We sate beside the Babylonian river :  
Within the conqueror's bound, weeping we sate :  
We hung our harps upon the trees that quiver  
Above the rushing waters desolate.

---

A song they claim'd—the men our task who meted—

“A song of Sion sing us, exile band !”

For song they sued, in pride around us seated :

How can we sing it in the stranger's land ?

ALEXANDER.

That song's a dirge, with notes of anger in it :

I hate the grief that nothing is save grief.

ARTABAZUS.

Sire, these are maidens of that Hebrew race.

SELEUCUS.

The osier-banks are pass'd. Once more that strain !

THE SONG.

If I forget thee, Salem, in thy sadness,

May this right hand forget the harper's art !

If I forget thee, Salem, in my gladness,

My tongue dry up, and wither, like my heart !

Daughter of Babylon, with misery wasted,

Blest shall he be, the man who hears thy moans ;

Who gives thee back the cup that we have tasted ;

Who lifts thy babes, and hurls them on the stones !

ALEXANDER.

That race a history has. Search out its annals !

SELEUCUS.

Our Grecian songs, for all their grace and light,  
Measured with such were as a wind-toss'd tress  
Match'd with yon sailing rack.

ARTABAZUS.

A galley comes—  
Those Babylonian braggarts make their revel.

CHALDEAN SONG.

Belus shall reign ! Higher, each day, and higher  
Rises his temple. Crouch, pale Hebrew slave !  
Proud Persian lord, thy never-quenchèd fire  
Trembles like death-flames o'er a murderer's grave.  
Ashur, rejoice !——

ALEXANDER.

The ages pass, like winds ;  
The old wrong remains, rooted like tombs, and moves  
not :  
All may be done through Time ; yet Time does nought.  
Let kings look well to that. We have reach'd our goal.  
Is that a tomb ?

ARTABAZUS.

The Assyrian monarchs, sir,  
Squander'd their lives in banquets, yet desired  
A solitary precinct for their graves :  
They revered Death :—the Greeks but deck and  
mock it.  
Those dusky crypts that pierce the rock sedge-girt,  
Are sepulchres of kings.

[*As Alexander turns, a gust blows his Causia into the water. The diadem that girdled it remains suspended on the reeds at the base of the tomb. A sailor plunges into the lake, and swims to the tomb, but, in his desire to keep the royal diadem dry, inadvertently sets it on his head. Thus crowned he re-enters the royal barge.*]

A SAILOR.

The omen's ill !

SECOND SAILOR.

The omen's black as night !

SELEUCUS (*drawing his sword*).

I'll drown it in his blood !



ALEXANDER.

A talent give him  
In guerdon for his bath and his good will,  
And, when we land, the scourge—to teach him manners.  
Omens ! That priest Chaldean spake of omens :  
Passing this morn his city-gates, I laugh'd :  
Three months I wore a cope of lead :—to-day  
I am stronger than at Tyre !

SELEUCUS.

May it please you, sir,  
The wind hath changed : we need three hours, or more,  
To reach the city.

ALEXANDER.

Mark that spot : 'tis there  
I build my fortress. Now to Babylon : haste !  
Drops fall apace : yon circlets on the mere  
Denote them heavy. Hark, a distant thunder !  
The heat is changed to cold. Our Artabazus  
Is old for summer drenchings.

ARTABAZUS.

Twenty years  
Press down my seventy. Sire, I should have pass'd  
Long since, yet may outlive the three years' child.

SCENE VI.—*A Street in Babylon.*

AMYNTAS and SOCRATES.

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AMYNTAS.

The royal throne was on the dais set :  
The generals' seats were ranged at either side :  
The Persian guard kept watch around the hall,  
Waiting earth's Master. Sudden, in the midst  
A Nubian stood—the meanest of his race ;  
A moment more, and on that regal seat  
The ill-featured shadow sat. They dared not touch him :  
The throne makes holy all that rests thereon.  
They beat their breasts with wailing long and loud.  
The king arrived. Still sat that slave all calm,  
With smile like that on idol faces vast  
Throned 'mid Egyptian sands.

SOCRATES.

They stoned him, doubtless ?

AMYNTAS.

The king forbade it. On the rack that slave  
Confess'd no crime : confederates he had none ;  
Was conscious of no purpose. Like a shaft

Some inspiration from on high had pierced him ;  
He push'd his spade into Euphrates' slime,  
And round him stared, enthroned. The king said little :  
He took his place, and bade them hold debate.  
Now know you why, forth-issuing, they were pale ;  
Why, here and there, in groups or pairs they whisper'd ;  
Why lay the red stain on Seleucus' brow.  
Never hath royal throne this wrong endured  
That changed not owner soon. The king will die.

SOCRATES.

I hear a rush of citizens this way making !

CITIZENS (*hurrying past*).

The king is sick, they say ! To the palace ! On !

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SCENE VII.—*The Palace at Babylon. Ante-room of the  
Royal Apartment.*

ANTIGONUS, PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, EUMENES, PEUCESTAS,  
PERDICCAS, *various Priests, and the Magian*, ASTAR.

---

PTOLEMY.

Sirs, know the truth : this sickness is to death.  
The king must die.

GREEK PRIEST.

This thing I fear'd since first  
I mark'd him drifting from his native gods  
To alien—yea, to Belus.

PERDICCAS.

Gods, sir priest,  
Grudge not each others' gains. To gods of Greece  
Each morn he offer'd duteous sacrifice,  
In sickness or in health. To foreign gods  
Slack was he—not o'er-duteous :—gods less known  
Are formidable more than custom'd gods  
Like-minded with ourselves. When certain Brahmins  
Stirr'd once their Indian monarch to revolt,  
Of that high race full six he crucified  
To awe the rest. That hour I fear'd ! that hour  
No priest his protest raised !

ANTIGONUS.

And at Sangala,  
The city his already, 'neath his sword  
Ten thousand warriors died. This head I'd give  
That deed had never been !

SELEUCUS.

Idiots ! be mute !—  
This thing he did—that thing he left undone—

Was born in such a year—in such was married :—  
Why, lords, men speak as if our king were dead,  
And they the embalmers, or the grave-diggers !  
He's sick. The tempest drench'd him. Shall a shower  
Wash out the one great glory from the earth ?  
We hid his sickness first : the secret's known :  
Since then, the world's gone mad.

## CHALDÆAN PRIEST.

The strength of prayer  
Is his, and shall be. We Chaldæan priests  
Nor incense stint, nor victim.

## GREEK PRIEST.

Not a throne  
Brightens Olympus but our prayer hath beat it !

## EGYPTIAN PRIEST.

Serapis knows if we have pray'd or not,  
He in whose image all the metals blend  
As all divinities are one in essence ;  
Serapis knows.

## SELEUCUS.

I see a Magian there :  
He stands, and speaks not : let the Magian speak.

*Alexander the Great.*

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ASTAR.

Sir, since the quenching of their Sacred Fire  
The Magian race stands silent. Be it so.

A ROYAL PAGE (*entering*).

The king has sent for Ptolemy.

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SCENE VIII.—*Alexander's Chamber.*

ALEXANDER, PTOLEMY.

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ALEXANDER.

We're stay'd in the midst.

PTOLEMY.

Sire, may the mighty gods——

ALEXANDER.

I'm hinder'd of my own : my march is hinder'd !  
That march was order'd for the third day hence :  
This bends it to the fifth.

PTOLEMY.

Too quickly pass——

## ALEXANDER.

Thus much the malice of o'er-weening gods,  
Or else their negligence, can fret our course !  
I'm maim'd, and tamed, and shamed : but mind can act  
When the outward act is barr'd. Six audiences  
I have given. The chief of my Thessalian horse  
Had fail'd to impress his blacksmiths. Nehordates  
Had sent no corn to Opis.

## PTOLEMY.

Sire, your eyes  
Are blood—all blood. Where is it you feel the pain ?

## ALEXANDER.

With pain I've wrestled oft, and flung it ever :  
Save for that fire in brain, and heart, and hand,  
I am well enough. My strength as yet is whole.  
To work ! You need the map. Despatch, this even,  
Heraclides to the Caspian, there to build  
A fleet exploratory : let him search  
If thence a passage lead not to the Euxine :  
That found, from Hellespont to banks of Indus  
A six weeks' march were spared.

## PTOLEMY.

One hour, my king,  
But one, give rest to that—

ALEXANDER.

Recall Nearchus :

Command that he forbear those Arab pirates :  
Bid him through help of theirs—an army with him—  
Circle all Afric, reach the Atlantic Pillars :  
Thence, eastward curving on the midland sea,  
He'll meet, near Carthage, or that coast Italian,  
Our westward-marching host. You're staring, sir !

PTOLEMY.

All shall be done.

ALEXANDER.

Ere sunset send to Egypt :  
Coasting her sea we need a road. Her sands  
Are fire that blasts my eyes.

PTOLEMY.

The brain o'er-heated  
Recalls Gedrosia's waste.

ALEXANDER.

My brain's not touch'd :  
I watch it : if beyond its verge there rise  
A cloud, the slenderest, of bewilder'd thought,  
You'll learn it thus—I close my lips for ever.



PTOLEMY.

Your thoughts are strong, my king, distinct, and plain.

ALEXANDER.

A light of conflagration makes them plain :

'Tis sent as from a pyre.

PTOLEMY.

Immortal gods !

To this high sufferer grant the balm of sleep !

ALEXANDER.

Sleep ! Can you guard me 'gainst ill dreams in slumber ?

I'll tell you one. I died ; and lay in death

A century 'mid those dead Assyrian kings

In their old tomb by yonder stagnant lake.

Then came a trumpet-blast that might have waked

Methought a sleeping world. It woke not them.

I could not rise : I could not join the battle :

Yet I saw all.

PTOLEMY.

What saw you, sire ?

ALEXANDER.

Twelve tents,

Each with my standard. On twelve hills they stood

Which either on their foreheads blazon'd wore,

Or from my fancy's instinct took, great names,  
Cithæron, Hæmus, Taurus, Libanus,  
Parapomismus, and huge Caucasus,  
With other five, and Athos in the midst.  
Then from my royal tents on those twelve hills,  
Mail'd in mine arms, twelve Alexanders crown'd,  
With all their armies, rush'd into a plain,  
Which quaked for fear, and dash'd across twelve floods,  
Euphrates, Issus, Tigris, Indus, Oxus,  
And others with great names. They met—those Twelve—  
And, meeting, swell'd in stature to the skies,  
And grappled, breast to breast, and fought, and died,  
Save four that, bleeding, each on other stared,  
And lean'd upon their swords. As thus they stood,  
Slow from that western heaven which domes the accursed—  
Rome's bandit brood—there moved a cloud night-black,  
Which, onward-gathering, master'd all the East,  
And o'er it rain'd a rain of fire. The earth  
Split, and the rivers twelve in darkness sank ;  
The twelve great mountains crumbled to the plain ;  
The bones of those twelve armies ceased from sight.  
Then from the sun that died, and dying moon,  
And stars subverted, fell great drops of blood,  
Large as their spheres, till all the earth was blood ;  
And o'er that blood-sea rang a female cry,  
“ The Royal House is dead.”

PTOLEMY.

My king, my friend——

ALEXANDER.

Phylax is dust. You cannot bid him tend me.

PTOLEMY.

Olympias, prescient, sent you, sire, from Greece  
But late its wisest leech. How oft you've said  
"A mother's prayers are hard to be withstood!"

ALEXANDER.

I loved her in the old days : nor years, nor wars  
Disturb'd that image. But a greater love  
In its great anguish tramples out all others.  
Impostors are they all—those heart-affections :  
They're dupes that make us dupes—  
There's not on earth a confidence unflaw'd.  
I think he kept from me at Tyre a secret  
Touching that palace. I from him conceal'd  
That warning strange at Hierosolyma,—  
Between those secrets was there aught in common?

PTOLEMY.

It may be, sire, there was.

ALEXANDER.

Ere yet that darkness,  
Hurl'd by injurious and malignant Fates  
Against this unsubverted head, had found me—  
The Fates that hustle heroes out of life ;  
The Fates that hustled gods into the abyss ;  
The unobsequious Fates that mock at all things—  
In diligent musings at Ecbatana  
I thus resolved ;—to see once more that priest :  
But in the gloomy raptures of just wrath  
That mood went by. I march'd to Babylon :  
Then came the end—Who sings ?

PTOLEMY.

Poor Hebrew slaves ;  
They weed the palace court.

THE SONG.

Behold, He giveth His belovèd sleep,  
And they shall waken in a land of rest :  
Behold, He leadeth Israel like a sheep :  
His pasture is the mountain of the Blest.

Blessed are they whose hands are pure from guilt ;  
Who bore the yoke from childhood, yet are free :  
Jerusalem is as a city built  
Wherein the dwellers dwell in unity.

ALEXANDER.

That song's amiss.

PTOLEMY.

Sire, for your army's sake,  
Which, like a wounded warrior, moans in sleep,  
Your Empire's sake, that, immature and weak,  
Is in its cradle threaten'd——

ALEXANDER.

'Tis so : 'tis so :

It lacks completion ; and the years, the months,  
The hours, like ravening wolves that hunt a stag,  
Come up upon my haunches. Six o' the clock  
On the fifth morn ! At noon we cross Euphrates :  
That hour you'll learn my plans——  
I'll cast this sickness from me, like the rags  
Flung from some lazar house ! Whose step is that ?

PTOLEMY.

Sire, there is none.

ALEXANDER.

Let not Seleucus near me !  
Those onsets of his blundering, blind devotion,  
So all unlike—— It nears us——

PTOLEMY.

Sire, there's nought.

ALEXANDER.

Be strong! What shall be must. Shake not: bend  
nearer!

I have a secret—one for thee alone:

'Twas not the mists from that morass disastrous,  
Nor death of him that died, nor adverse gods,  
Nor the Fates themselves; 'twas something mightier yet,  
And secreter in the great night, that slew me.

[SELEUCUS *enters.*]

Welcome, Seleucus!

SELEUCUS.

Sire, I come unbidden:

This Ptolemy—has Greece but one who loves you?

ALEXANDER.

Welcome, my brave Seleucus! In five days  
We march, at earliest dawn. A month shall find us  
Nighing old Egypt's coast. This scroll be yours:  
A code it is for Alexandria's rule.  
Therein I have made you lord. Till morn, farewell.

[SELEUCUS *departs reluctantly.*]

I note you shaken, Ptolemy: learn thence

Philosophy's a crutch for strength to play with:

It mocks our need. I march on the fifth day.  
Farewell.

[*As PTOLEMY is departing.*]

Return. Your tablets—I would see them.  
Write down—the duty this of Eumenes—  
He cheats his tasks—write down my burial place.  
Likeliest you guess it.

PTOLEMY.

Macedonian Pella?

Old ties are strong in death.

ALEXANDER.

It is not Pella.

PTOLEMY.

This Babylon, where he you loved lies dead?

ALEXANDER.

'Mid sands Egyptian—'mid the Ammonian grove—  
In my great father's fane.

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SCENE IX.—*Ecbatana.*

ARSINOE

*(Alone on a balcony of the Palace).*

---

She sleeps. Thou blessed sleep that most dost bless us  
When we in thy great gift forget the gift,  
Oh, call us not ingrate ! She sleeps : there's nought  
Like sleep to help a heavy heart ;—not music ;  
That brings her back the memory of old times ;  
Not love like mine ; that whispers of another's ;  
Not flowers nor song of birds, nor airs sweet-laden ;  
If these poor flatteries force a smile upon her,  
Brief infidelity how soon avenged,  
The unwonted apparition leaves her dim ;  
And those sad eyes make inquest without words  
“ Shall we no more behold him ? ”

Silent stars

That flash from yonder firmament serene,  
Ye have no portion in these pangs of earth ;  
Ye mock not man with sympathy infirm :  
I thank you for your clear, unpitying brightness  
That freezes Time's deceits. The Lord of Light  
That which he is, sternly in you hath writ—  
Truth, justice, wisdom, order. Ye endure :  
Our storms sweep o'er you, but they shake you not :



Darkness, your foe, but brings your hour of triumph :  
Your teaching is—to bear.

The Lord of Light—

Is it a woman's weakness that would wish him  
Another, tenderer name, the Lord of Love?  
A love that out of love created all things ;  
A love that, warring ever, willeth peace ;  
A patient love, from ill educating good ;  
A conquering love, triumphant over death?—  
Ah me ! No land there is that clasps this faith !  
To hold it were to feel from heaven a hand  
Laid on the aching breast of human kind,  
A hallowing touch, yet softer than the kiss  
Of some imagined babe. Come quickly, Death !  
Beyond thy gate is Truth.

A LADY (*entering*).

Madam, but now  
Your sister woke, and gently breathed your name ;  
But slept ere I could answer.

ARSINOE.

Watch beside her :  
When next she moves, make sign.

Eternal Truth,  
Why has our Persia miss'd you? Truth she loved :

She train'd her sons in valour and in truth :  
And yet in vain for you our Magians strain'd  
Their night-dividing eyes ! From sceptred watchers  
Turn'd she her all-pure countenance to reward  
More late some humbler vigil ? It must be !  
The unceasing longing cannot be in vain :  
The agony of virtue crownless here,  
And great love sorrow-crown'd. If earth can find,  
Indeed, no answer to her children's cry,  
Wandering from yon bright host a star will lead  
The lowliest of *her* wanderers, lowly and wise,  
In age still faithful to their childhood's longing,  
To where in some obscurest spot lies hid  
The saviour-soul of self-subsistent Truth,  
Some great world-conquering, world-delivering Might,  
The future's cradled Hope.

THE LADY (*re-entering*).

Madam, she wakes.

---

SCENE X.—*The Palace of Babylon.*

*In the centre of the council hall is a pallet on which ALEXANDER lies. The royal pages kneel at each side. Around, or in groups at the entrance, stand EUMENES, CASSANDER, PTOLEMY, AMYNTAS, SOCRATES, PEUCESTAS, PERDICCAS, PTOLEMY, SELEUCUS, and other Generals.*

---

PTOLEMY.

It is a six days' journey : ere the noon  
The young, pale queen in far Ecbatana's palace  
Will break our seal, and read.

SOCRATES

*(Near the gate of the hall).*

The day draws near :  
And with the torch-light red, the scared, wan dawn  
Blends in that cave of death.

AMYNTAS.

But eight days since  
It was a hall of council whence the world  
Waited her sentence. I could deem its air  
Was thick with phantom shapes. Is all hope lost ?

SOCRATES.

At midnight hope surceased. The fever sank ;  
With it his strength. He bade them bear him hither :  
And speaks not since.

AMYNTAS.

See you yon palace black ?  
There lies the old queen ! from window on to window  
The lights pass quick. There's sorrow there. 'Tis cold !

SOCRATES.

You shake.

AMYNTAS.

They woke me sudden with the news.

ANTIGONUS (*entering*).

The Persian has his trouble as the Greek.  
Old Sizygambis sinks from hour to hour :  
She came from Susa hither, vexed by dreams,  
Found the king sick, and foodless sits since then  
Upon the palace floor. A funeral veil  
O'er-hangs her glittering eyes and plaited forehead :  
Her Magians stand around : the royal children  
Kneel at her feet.

SOCRATES.

In great Serapis' temple  
Four generals watch'd from early night to morn,  
Hoping some intimation from the god.  
Nor oracle nor vision was vouchsafed.  
At last Seleucus, kneeling at the shrine,  
Besought, " Shall the sick king, a suppliant, lay him  
Beneath the healing shadow of this fane ?"  
'Twas answer'd, " Where he lies, there let him bide."

AMYNTAS.

That meant, that here abiding, he shall live.

ANTIGONUS.

It meant, that death is better than to live.

PTOLEMY (*near the pallet*).

Seleucus, you were with him ?

SELEUCUS.

Half the night

My tears bedew'd his hand.

PTOLEMY.

Knew he things round him ?

SELEUCUS.

He knew them well—and things beyond them knew.  
Long time he watch'd, or seem'd to watch, the passions  
Of some great fight that makes a world or mars,  
And saw all lost. "Parmenio fought against me :—  
'Twas death's cold river gave him back his youth,"  
He mutter'd low. Next spake he of some priest,  
And seem'd to grasp his wrist, and reason with him :  
Two hours with lips foam-fleck'd he held discourse,  
As one who proudly pleads, yet pleads for life ;  
Then ceased, and slept.

EUMENES.

Keep silence at the gates !

ANTIGONUS (*drawing near*).

The soldiers will to see him.

PTOLEMY.

Let it be :

'Tis now too late for aught to work him ill.

[*The soldiers stream in, circling successively the  
royal pallet, till the whole hall is thronged.*]

SELEUCUS.

The soldiers' friend ! He hears their stifled moaning :

His eye is following them—he fain would stretch  
Toward them his hand !

EUMENES.

Speak to him, Ptolemy !

PTOLEMY.

Sire, it is come ! the king is king in death :  
Speak the king's ordinance. Who shall wear his crown ?

ALEXANDER.

The worthiest head.

[*A long silence.*]

PTOLEMY.

Once more his lips are moving :  
Perdiccas, you are keen of ear : bend low—  
Bend to his lips.

EUMENES.

His fingers move : he slides  
The royal ring into Perdiccas' hand.

PTOLEMY.

Hear you no words ?

PERDICCAS.

I think he said, "Patroclus."

PTOLEMY.

Once more ?

PERDICCAS.

He said, " Achilles follow'd soon."

SELEUCUS.

And died in saying it. 'Tis past. He's gone !

PTOLEMY.

The greatest spirit that ever trod this earth  
From earth has pass'd. He, swifter than the morn  
O'er-rush'd the globe. Expectant centuries  
Condensed themselves into a few brief years  
To work his will ; and all the buried ages  
Summ'd their old wealth, to enrich, for man's behoof,  
With virtuous wisdom one Olympian mind  
Which, grappling all things—needing not experience—  
Yet scorn'd no diligence, the weapons shaped,  
Itself, that hewed its way, nor left to others  
The pettiest of those cares that, small themselves,  
Are rivets which make whole the mail of greatness.  
The world hath had its conquerors :—one alone  
Conquer'd for weal of them who bow'd beneath him,  
And in the vanquish'd found his firmest friends  
And passionatest mourners.  
The world hath had its kings :—but one alone  
To whom a kingdom meant a radiant fabric,



No tyrant's dungeon-keep, no merchant's mart,  
But all-intelligential, so combining  
All interests, aspirations, efforts, aims,  
That man's great mind, therein made one o'er earth,  
Might show all knowledge in its boundless glass,  
As the sea shows the sun. Rough Macedon,  
Boast ; yet be just ! This wonder's nurse thou wert :  
A mightier was his mother. Earth, take back  
Thy chief of sons ! Henceforth his tomb art thou.

## SELEUCUS.

Lords, he is gone who made us what we are ;  
And we, to native nothingness remanded,  
Have that, not words, to offer him for praise.  
There stand among us some that watch'd his boyhood ;  
They have had their wish,—he lived his life. The gods,  
Fear'd they the next step of their earthly rival,  
Who press'd so near their thrones ? Your pardon, lords !  
He's dead who should this day have praised the dead,  
Happiest in this, that ere his friend he died.  
Lords, we have lived in festival till now,  
And knew it not. The approaching woes, they best  
Shall measure greatness gone. The men who 'scape,  
Building new fortunes on the wreck-strewn shore,  
Shall to their children speak in life's sad eve  
Of him who made its morning. Let them tell

His deeds but half, or no man will believe them :  
It may be they will scarce themselves believe,  
Deeming the past a dream. That hour, their tears  
Down-streaming, unashamed, like tears in sleep,  
Will better their poor words :—who hear shall cry,  
Pale with strong faith, “There lived an Alexander.”

*[A passage opens in the crowd, and ASTAR stands  
up beside the body of ALEXANDER.]*

ASTAR.

Conquerors of Persia, now yourselves death-conquer'd,  
Another royal corse makes dumb the world.  
The mother of Darius, Sizygambis,  
As o'er the horizon's verge the rising sun  
Lifted its Persia-worshipp'd forehead, dropp'd  
Upon the dust her brow discrown'd, and died.

PTOLEMY.

Empire o'er empire topples : Persia first ;  
Above her, she that vanquish'd Persia—Greece.

THE END.



MAY, 1874.

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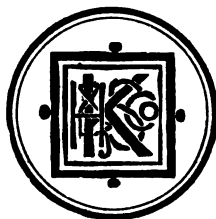
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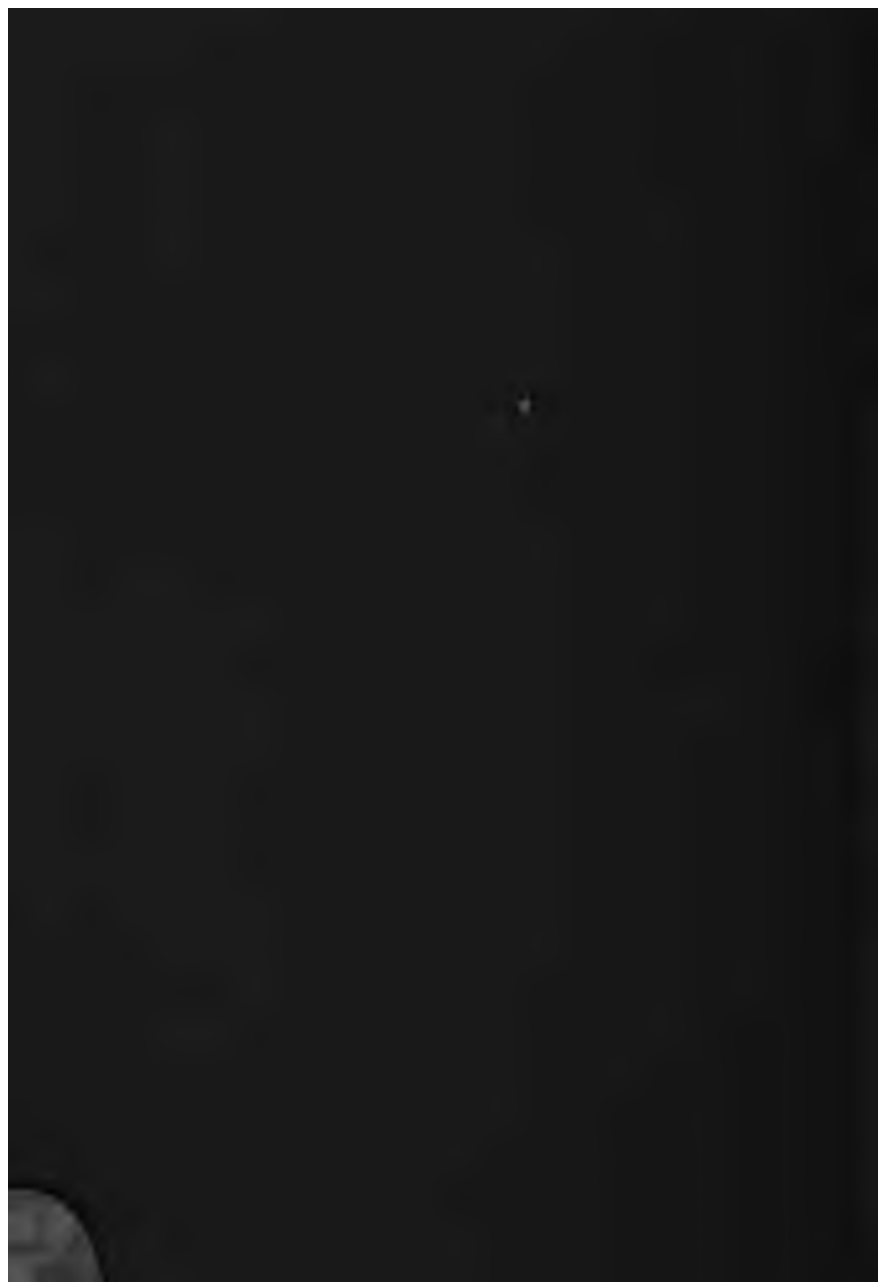


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